

To: Abrams, Dan[Abrams.Dan@epa.gov]
From: Bressler, Lindsey
Sent: Wed 8/5/2015 1:38:57 PM
Subject: RE: CPP News Clips: State by State Part 3

Okay, so I missed the memo that the workshop is in the Ronald Reagan Building, which means I'm here now... planning on finishing the states we missed ASAP with Kennedy.

Do you want updates for the other states as well? Here at my desk if you need to talk to me, Kristiene should be back by 10.

From: Abrams, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 5:12 PM
To: Abrams, Dan; Allen, Laura; Andreasen, Julia; Blanchard, Daniel; Bond, Brian; Bremer, Kristen; Bressler, Lindsey; Colaizzi, Jennifer C.; Cox, Taylor; Daguillard, Robert; Davis, Alison; Davis, Jay; Dennis, Allison; Enobakhare, Rosemary; Goffman, Joseph; Gong, Kristiene; Harrison, Melissa; Hart, Daniel; Hull, George; Jones, Enesta; Kowalski, Kennedy; Lee, Monica; Lehman, Rachel; Ludwigsen, Emily; McCabe, Janet; Milbourn, Cathy; Millett, John; Noonan, Jenny; Orquina, Jessica; Ortiz, Julia; Purchia, Liz; Ragland, Micah; Reynolds, Thomas; Risley, David; Smith, Roxanne; StClair, Christie; Sutton, Amanda; Valentine, Julia; Wilson, Erika
Subject: CPP News Clips: State by State Part 3

NOTE: This is not comprehensive. A final list will come tomorrow morning.

DELAWARE

Delaware News Journal (DE):

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/local/2015/08/03/delaware-head-start-white-house-co-plan/31071213/>

Delaware has head start on White House CO2 plan

CARBON AT THE CRUX OF CLEAN POWER PLAN, CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE

The inescapable fact of rising global CO2 levels, an "unequivocal" human connection and the potential for catastrophic global climate change are behind the newly finalized EPA Clean Power Plan, announced Monday by President Obama.

A HOT FUTURE

Researchers have warned that Delaware could see an extra 60 days annually of 90-degree-plus temperatures, and 30 days a year of 100-degree-plus highs without significant cuts in business-as-usual CO2 emissions.

A RANGE OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES

Torrential rains, extended droughts, flooding, heavy power demands for cooling and threats to coastal and tidal areas from rising sea levels all are part of Delaware's future if CO2 emissions keep rising, scientists report.

ARCTIC ICE RETREAT

In 2012, end-of-summer Arctic sea ice extent fell to the lowest level since 1979 and the start of the satellite-based record. It has taken a troubling turn again this year. A near-total loss of late summer ice is expected in coming decades as rising CO2 levels bring changes in the planet's ability to reflect heat, increases in ocean temperatures and acidity and changes to ocean circulation, factors that could amplify climate problems.

AN UPHILL CHALLENGE

While coal has lost a large share of electricity generation in the multi-state PJM grid, it still

accounts for more than a third of the region's electricity. Cleaning up or shifting to cleaner or renewable sources could mean higher rates for consumers, including those in Delaware.

While Delaware has been ahead of most of the country in curbing power plant carbon dioxide emissions blamed for rising global temperatures, new rules announced Monday by President Obama likely will prove tougher and more costly.

The new standards come amid concerns that progress in meeting carbon dioxide reductions has been too slow nationwide and globally to meet a United Nations goal of holding the world's temperature increase below about 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit by the turn of the century, according to many scientists.

Delaware has made huge strides, cutting emissions by 40 percent since 2008, and Gov. Jack Markell said Monday that the White House plan "sort of builds on what we've been doing" in Delaware through state energy policies and the multi-state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

"Our view all along has been that policies that can help us achieve a better environment, better health for our people and create jobs and put money in peoples' pockets by having to spend less on energy – that's a pretty good place to be," Markell said.

Under the White House plan, power plants would have to cut emissions by 32 percent by 2030, compared with emissions in 2005. Reductions would have to begin in 2022.

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary David Small said the state has reduced CO2 emissions dramatically over the last decade, bringing it close to the goal already.

"We feel pretty confident we're going to meet the compliance goals of the program," Small said.

The state still has 1.14 megatons worth of reductions left to go to meet its own goal of a 30-

percent reduction in greenhouse gases (based on the 2008 benchmark) by 2030. That reduction target includes both power plant emissions and other areas of the state's carbon footprint, including agriculture, transportation and residential and commercial sources.

State officials concede that many of the cuts made so far have been "the low hanging fruit" with steps such as shifts from coal to natural gas at power plants and additional pollution controls at smokestacks. Future reductions will be more difficult to achieve and perhaps more painful for regular Delawareans because the state plan reaches all sectors of carbon emissions.

Also, Delaware power plants generate relatively little of the electricity going into homes and businesses. Most is delivered from the big, collective supply of the the 14-state PJM power grid. Most states in PJM are not part of RGGI, and many, like Pennsylvania, have large numbers of coal-fired plants that could face significantly higher costs to comply with the White House plan. Those costs would likely be reflected in customer monthly bills.

Small said that Delaware's participation in the regional greenhouse gas consortium has been a key and he said he anticipates that other states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania might ultimately form similar alliances to work together for reductions.

Small said state officials still aren't sure what their target will be under the new federal plan though the benchmark will be based on 2005 emissions rather than 2008 standard used to set Delaware's state-wide reduction goal.

"We're well aware of the impacts that greenhouse gas emissions tend to make in our environment, so we would have to be very supportive of anything that can help us limit carbon emissions," said Delaware Public Service Commission Executive Director Robert Howatt.

"With that being said, we have to balance that with the costs of achieving those emissions," Howatt said, "and obviously this is not something we can just throw on the backs of ratepayers without some consideration of the impacts the costs would have."

Deb Brown, president and CEO of the American Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic, said that

even as the new rule targets climate change, the health benefits will be significant.

After 2030, the federal mandated reductions could lead to 3,600 fewer premature deaths annually and reduce by thousands the number of asthma attacks, she said.

"We see this as a really good win for public health," Brown said.

Scientists worldwide have warned that rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, much of it from fossil fuel burning, are pushing global temperatures dangerously higher. Levels already have risen about 1 degree worldwide, half the distance toward the level where catastrophic changes in weather and climate become more likely.

Delaware got a jump on the problem in 2008, when lawmakers agreed to make the state part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The nine-state coalition became the nation's first program to cap and reduce CO2 emissions, and to create a system that allows auctioning and trading of emissions credits.

The trading system lets plants that have cleaned up faster to sell credits to those that need more time, or to organizations that want to "retire" credits to move the region more quickly toward its goals.

Delaware's emissions already had fallen by 22 percent between 2005 and 2012, a change attributed to a range of developments, including shutdowns of older, coal-burning plants and shifts to cleaning burning natural gas fuel supplies.

Sen. Harris B. McDowell III, D-Wilmington North, said he wants to see more information on the Obama administration's proposal before commenting in detail.

McDowell was one of the leaders of Delaware's move to join the region CO2 control program, and to create a new Sustainable Energy Utility to help direct proceeds from emissions credit

auctions to clean energy and energy efficiency programs.

"In the energy field, you also have to be pragmatic," McDowell said. "It isn't enough to say 'This is the ideal and let's go get it.' Sometimes you just can't get there. Economics intervene."

Critics of the administration's Clean Power Plan have argued that proposed emissions cuts are too drastic and the time frame too short for reductions on the scale recommended by United Nations researchers.

Solar panels in Georgetown absorb sunlight on Aug. 21, 2013. Power plants will have to cut emissions by 32 percent by 2030 under a White House plan. (Photo: GARY EMEIGH/THE NEWS JOURNAL)

The Electric Reliability Coordinating Council, a group of energy companies, warned that the changes would become a drag on the economy and increase energy costs for families across the country.

Little effect on global CO₂ levels are likely if the plan goes forward, the ERCC said, because plants in the United States account for only a small part of global emissions and future temperature outlooks.

Last year, U.N. scientists said global CO₂ emissions need to stop growing entirely by 2030, and need to fall over the following 20 years to a level that would be less than half the total in 2010, then drop to "net zero" by 2100.

RGGI – Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

What: Delaware, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont (New Jersey was a partner until Gov. Chris Christy pulled out of the program) joined to cap carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. The

program allows power plants to offset up to 3.3 percent of required carbon emission reductions through the purchase of credits. The credits are used to reduce carbon pollution through specific state programs.

Barack Obama

President Barack Obama speaks about his Clean Power Plan, Monday, Aug. 3, 2015, in the East Room at the White House in Washington. The president is mandating even steeper greenhouse gas cuts from U.S. power plants than previously expected, while granting states more time and broader options to comply. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh) (Photo: AP)

Total Payments to Delaware since 2008: \$71.9 million.

Where Delaware's Money goes: 65-percent to the Sustainable Energy Utility; 15- percent to low income energy assistance programs; 10-percent to state grant programs for greenhouse gas reduction; 10-percent for climate change and RGGI program work.

What is an offset? An offset can be a project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or for a carbon sequestration project.

Delaware's Carbon Footprint -- where it comes from

With reductions from power plants and shifts from coal to natural gas, transportation is a large sector of the state's carbon footprint -- about 34 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Utilities -- 31 percent

Industry - 16 percent

Residential -- 8 percent

Commercial -- 6 percent

Agriculture -- 4- percent

Waste -- 1 percent

Delaware News Journal (DE):

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/08/03/expect-legal-fight-carbon-plan/31079801/>

Expect legal fight over carbon plan

Our View 6:16 p.m. EDT August 3, 2015

President Obama pulled out the stops on Monday and issued orders for the first mandated carbon reduction in U.S. history. The new Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan gives states a little more than a year to submit plans to cut back coal-fired electricity plants and until 2022 to start implementing them.

The proposal is considered a big, bold "second-term Obama" step to slow down climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Republicans in Congress and Republicans in statehouses across the country oppose it. They say it will wreck the American economy. Democratic governors, like Delaware's, endorse it. They call it a giant step forward and a much-needed step in the battle against sea-level rise.

However, this is more than the usual Republican-Democratic split. Several environmentalists say the plan is too little and too long range. Bigger changes are needed now.

There is little doubt we need to switch from coal-fired electricity to more sustainable production. No doubt, sooner would be better. However, this may be the best that can be done given the political circumstances.

The environmentalist critics have a point. The changes will not take place under this plan for a long time. In reality, the relative cheapness of natural gas has reduced much of the reliance on coal. The marketplace worked more quickly than the regulation.

Another problem is that under this plan the opposing states also have an economic incentive to resist it. Places like Wyoming would be harder hit than Delaware. Pocketbook costs make winning the hearts and minds a little tougher.

The biggest problem with the plan is that it comes by executive order. President Obama is being praised for his boldness in doing so. However, that means the order does not have the weight that the Congress-passed and president-signed environmental laws of the 1960s and 1970s do.

Since it is an executive order, the next chief executive will have to make a choice to go ahead with the plan or dilute it. Even Hillary Clinton's own proposal stretches the deadlines out over a longer timeline.

Congress being what it is and our political culture as torn as it is, the plan will be attacked in court. Expect a bitter battle in Congress, one that laps over into the 2016 elections. A countermanning law may be passed by the Republicans. In that case, expect a veto. Then expect governors to sue to stop the plan.

Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court will have the final say.

And how long will that take?

The goal is right. We need to reduce carbon emissions. However, the plan is at bottom a mass of regulations and federal regulations that have long lists of delays, dilutions and exceptions. Regulations these days usually lead to court battles. Marketplace changes, however, cannot be appealed. Cheaper natural gas would be a better first step.

Delaware Public Radio (DE):

<http://delawarepublic.org/post/gov-markell-backs-pres-obamas-clean-power-plan>

Gov. Markell backs Pres. Obama's Clean Power Plan

By ELI CHEN • 22 HOURS AGO

Gov. Jack Markell (D-Delaware) voiced his support for the White House's newly unveiled Clean Power Plan to cut carbon pollution on Monday.

"We think investing in efficiency makes a ton of sense because what you'll see is when people use less energy, it'll be good for their pocketbooks. We think [the Clean Power Plan] has potential, if it's implemented well, of being a win-win-win, in terms of the economy, health and the environment," said Markell.

The Clean Power Plan aims to cut emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels by the year 2030. This goal is 9 percent higher than what Obama originally proposed a year ago. The new standards set by the plan will require every state to reduce carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants, while rewarding investments for wind and solar.

Last December, state officials also announced an ambitious plan to reduce Delaware's greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by the year 2030. The First State's coal production is low compared to the rest of the nation.

However, Delaware's air quality is impacted by pollution coming from the Midwest's coal-fired power plants. In April, the American Lung Association gave Delaware a failing grade for high ozone levels for the seventh year in a row. 90 percent of the pollution that causes high ozone levels comes from sources outside the First State. Ozone can cause inflammation in the lungs and breathing problems over time.

"Despite great steps from Delaware, there would be wind from the Midwest. We unfortunately get a lot of their pollution, so anything that reduces the pollutants out there will be good for us," said Markell.

Markell was one of eight governors appointed to the White House Task Force for Climate Preparedness in 2013.

MARYLAND

CBS Baltimore:

<http://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2015/08/04/maryland-on-track-to-meet-obamas-clean-climate-plan/>

Maryland On Track To Meet Obama's Clean Climate Plan

August 4, 2015 3:47 PM Alex DeMetrick

WASHINGTON, D.C. (WJZ) — Cutting America's carbon footprint to lessen the impact of climate change is going to be a challenge for states.

WJZ's Alex DeMetrick reports on where Maryland is in meeting President Barack Obama's tougher goals.

Coal is the fuel that makes most of this country's electricity.

But burning it to make steam to turn generators also produces carbon dioxide — a major greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere, melting polar ice and glaciers as Earth's climate warms.

Obama is pledging the U.S. will do its part by reducing carbon pollution.

"We'll be keeping 870 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution out of our atmosphere," Obama said.

How? Obama is ordering a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Meanwhile, wind and solar power will rise from 5 percent as an energy source to 28 percent.

But can Maryland do it?

"So the state of Maryland is in pretty good shape," said Mike Tidwell, the head of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. "We've passed a number of pieces of legislation that make it much easier for Maryland to conform to the federal plan."

Among the legislation was a law passed in 2009 mandating a 25 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020.

At the same time, there's been a 15 percent reduction in energy consumption due to state incentives.

It's a head start on Obama's 32 percent reduction.

"We're already on course to exceed the numbers," Tidwell said.

Congressional Republicans and the coal industry oppose the President's plan, backed up by conservative think-tanks.

"Because energy is such a staple for everything we produce and consume, those costs are going to ripple through the economy and not just when your energy bill comes," said Nic Loris, an economist with the Heritage Foundation.

"The opponents of this in Maryland and nationally are saying the same tired arguments they've been saying for decades and we're going to get the same result — they're going to be wrong,"

Tidwell argued.

A debate that's sure to generate its own heat.

Dozens of states say they'll challenge the president's carbon goals in court. The Hogan administration is withholding for now.

-

WBAL TV:

<http://www.wbalv.com/news/maryland-officials-reviewing-obamas-greenhouse-gas-limits/34525022>

Maryland officials reviewing Obama's greenhouse gas limits

Published 8:17 AM EDT Aug 04, 2015

ANNAPOLIS, Md. —Republican Gov. Larry Hogan's administration is taking some time to review the impact of President Barack Obama's plan to dramatically cut emissions from U.S. power plants, while Maryland Democrats already were praising the plan released Monday.

Ben Grumbles, secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment, said it will take a while to review the plan's 3,000 pages. He said Maryland is well-positioned to be a leader among states in the transition to cleaner and greener energy, on its own terms and through regional collaboration.

"We are making significant progress in implementing Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, and we will issue a detailed report on our progress this fall," Grumbles said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin, a Democrat, hailed Obama's plan as a commonsense approach to reduce U.S. carbon pollution.

"The bold goals set by the Obama Administration today give states the tools they need to cut pollution, support consumers and grow our economy. Already, hundreds of major businesses have come out in support of the Clean Power Plan because energy efficiency and addressing climate change are good for business...", Cardin said.

"In Maryland, where 70 percent of Marylanders live in coastal zones, we have some of the strongest air pollution standards in the country. Current and new standards contribute to healthier communities and new jobs from a growing economy. The U.S. must continue to lead by example. Pollution, storms and droughts do not abide by state or international borders."

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, a Democrat, called the plan "a historic step to protect public health, create good-paying jobs and combat the dangerous effect of climate change."

"Today's final Clean Power Plan is a historic milestone in the urgent battle to combat climate change," Van Hollen said on Monday. "It will limit dangerous carbon pollution from power plants for the first time ever and provide an economic opportunity for every state to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Maryland has been a leader in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and now we have a national blueprint to better protect public health while creating good-paying jobs in new energy technologies."

Rep. John Sarbanes, a Democrat whose district includes Annapolis near the Chesapeake Bay, said the plan is the most significant commitment by any American president to fight climate change.

"Climate change is the challenge of our generation, but for too long, a political cloud of denial has blocked meaningful efforts to take action," he said. "Before it's too late, the political consensus must catch up with the scientific consensus. That's why I strongly support the president's Clean Power Plan – a monumental and serious step toward a more healthy and sustainable future."

Rep. Andy Harris, Maryland's only Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives, said the Environmental Protection Agency's proposal will raise energy costs and hurt hardworking Marylanders who already are struggling to pay their electric bills.

"Increasing energy costs here in America will ship jobs overseas and hurt our struggling economy," Harris said.

The Baltimore Sun (MD):

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/blog/bs-md-clean-power-20150803-story.html#page=1>

Md. has head start in meeting controversial federal climate rules

By Timothy B. Wheeler

Maryland has head start in meeting Obama "Clean Power" rules, though they still stir debate.

With its initiatives to curb climate-altering power plant emissions and to promote renewable energy, Maryland has a head start in complying with the Clean Power Plan that President Barack Obama unveiled Monday, federal and state officials said.

Obama's plan drew praise from Maryland's Democratic members of Congress and from environmentalists, who said federal action on power plant emissions to address climate change is long overdue.

But Republican lawmakers and the coal industry took a dim view, warning that consumers could wind up paying more for power and that hundreds of miners in Western Maryland could lose jobs.

The Hogan administration's top environmental official was noncommittal stance on the federal regulations, while saying Maryland has made "significant progress" on its own and with other

states in reducing climate-altering pollution.

The new power plant rules, released after two years of study and debate, are expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions nationwide by 32 percent over the next 15 years while boosting the share of power produced by wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy from 12 percent to 21 percent.

Fossil fuel - fired power plants are the biggest source of climate-altering carbon dioxide, making up nearly a third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

"We think that these goals are realistic for all the states," Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for air, said in a telephone briefing with reporters.

Since the agency proposed the power plant limits 14 months ago, she said, officials mulled over more than 4 million comments and tweaked the plan to give states and utilities more flexibility to figure out the least costly and least disruptive way to reduce carbon pollution while maintaining the reliability of the electric power grid.

States are required to submit plans next year, but the EPA may grant a two-year deferral if a state argues it needs more time. If a state refuses to submit a plan, or submits a plan that EPA finds is unworkable, the federal government will impose its own carbon-reduction program.

With several states and industries already objecting to the EPA plan, it is sure to be challenged in court. Robert Percival, a professor of environmental law at the University of Maryland, said it appeared that EPA had tweaked its rule to make it more legally defensible, giving states another two years — until 2022 — to begin mandatory emission reductions, and by dropping requirements for achieving energy efficiency.

For Maryland, the new federal requirements might not be much of an adjustment, at least at first. The state is committed under a 2009 state law to reduce climate-altering pollution to 75 percent of 2006 levels by 2020.

According to the White House, Maryland has reduced its power plant carbon pollution 35 percent since 2008, largely through a compact it joined with eight Northeast states to make electricity generators bid for the right to continue emitting carbon.

The auctions of those carbon "credits" by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative have yielded more than \$200 million for the state since 2012, with the proceeds providing grants and other incentives for installing solar panels, buying more efficient appliances and helping the poor pay their utility bills, among other things.

EPA says it wants to encourage such carbon trading among states.

Maryland also has indirectly curbed carbon emissions by offering utility customers rebates and other incentives to reduce per capita electricity consumption 15 percent since 2007. And like many other states, Maryland has set a goal to get 20 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2022, with at least 2 percent from the sun.

"Maryland's done enough over the last decade that the state essentially doesn't have to do much to conform to the Clean Power Plan," said Mike Tidwell, head of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. But he noted that Maryland lawmakers must renew their commitment next year to the state's greenhouse gas reduction plan, and he predicted that Obama's action would make climate change an issue in next year's elections.

Several Democratic members of Maryland's congressional delegation hailed the administration's move.

Sen. Ben Cardin called the regulations "strong but flexible and fair." He said they should be especially welcome in Maryland, where 70 percent of residents live in coastal zones. And he said curbing carbon emissions should also yield reductions in other forms of pollution, which should make the air safer to breathe and help clean up the Chesapeake Bay.

The EPA says its rule should produce a 72 percent reduction in nitrogen oxides, another power plant pollutant that contributes to smog, which threatens the health of millions in Maryland and elsewhere. The nitrogen emissions fall from the sky, and when washed into the bay by rainfall help feed the algae blooms that cloud the water and rob it of oxygen for fish and crabs.

Rep. Andy Harris, the state's lone Republican in Congress, predicted EPA's action would raise energy costs and hurt "hardworking Marylanders who are already struggling to pay their electric bills."

He warned higher energy costs would drive jobs overseas and hurt the U.S economy. Sen. George Edwards, a Republican state lawmaker who represents Western Maryland, echoed Harris' view that electricity rates will go up.

The EPA says people should see their electric bills decline, so that by 2030 the average family is saving about \$7 a month.

A spokesman for Exelon, which owns Baltimore Gas and Electric Co., said the Chicago-based energy giant is reviewing the regulations.

Maryland's "dwindling" mining industry fears the rules spell its demise, as utilities shift power generation to other fuels, said Adrienne Ottaviani, executive director of the Maryland Coal Association.

There are only about 10 mining companies still operating in Western Maryland, Ottaviani said, with around 500 employees. Nearly all are what she called mom-and-pop operations that have been struggling to survive in difficult economic conditions, as reduced energy consumption curtails demand for coal. She repeated a long-held industry view that Obama has been committed to eliminating their livelihood.

"I think this may be the nail in the coffin for Maryland companies," she said.

The Hogan administration withheld judgment, for now. Maryland Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles said state officials are reviewing the rule to assess its effect on people, communities and the business climate.

Grumbles said the Hogan administration supports "balanced and practical environmental regulations that ensure affordable and reliable energy supplies for current and future Marylanders."

But he added that "the good news is Maryland is well-positioned to be a leader among states" in transitioning to a less carbon-intense economy, through initiatives the state has taken on its own and in concert with other states.

MICHIGAN

Michigan Radio:

<http://michiganradio.org/post/support-and-criticism-obama-clean-power-plan-sadly-predictable#stream/0>

Support and criticism of Obama clean power plan sadly predictable

By JACK LESSENBERRY • 6 HOURS AGO

Years ago, a professor who had contempt for politics asked me if I knew what the difference was between Pavlov's dogs and most politicians. His answer was: Sometimes when the great Russian behaviorist rang his bell, the dogs failed to salivate.

Listen Listening...3:00 Jack Lessenberry talks about President Obama's Clean Power Plan

I thought of that yesterday, when President Obama announced his Clean Power Plan covering carbon emissions in all the states. Every Republican in sight immediately denounced the plan, most before they could have had a chance to read and study it.

Michigan State Senator Mike Nofs, who chairs the Energy and Technology Committee, was typical. He said,

“I think all that’s going to do is cost American businesses money and we won’t be able to compete globally because we’ll be paying so much for energy.”

He wants, “to stick with our plan for a Michigan solution to a Michigan problem,” he said. Evidently he isn’t aware that the air and winds and waterways don’t respect our state boundaries, but hey; who cares about logic?

Democrats, in an equally predictable fashion, leapt to the President’s defense. House Minority Leader Tim Greimel said, “The Clean Power Plan creates opportunities for Michigan to become a healthier, cleaner state powered by energy sources that do not harm our communities and natural resources,” et cetera.

Well, both men would have reacted in much the same way if Obama had announced a plan to trade with North Korea or cut business taxes. The bell rings, and they salivate.

So how do you decide what’s real? Well, as scholars will tell you, it often makes sense to consult the primary source: In this case, President Obama’s actual speech when he announced the Clean Power Plan yesterday afternoon. Here’s part of it:

The President noted that, “One year does not make a trend, but 14 of the last 15 warmest years on record have fallen within the first 15 years of our century.” He noted also that “over the last three decades nationwide asthma rates have more than doubled, and climate change puts those

Americans at greater risk of landing in the hospital.”

When I read that, what popped into my head was folk singer Joni Mitchell’s famous line: “Don’t it always seem to go/that you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.”

If we screw up the environment beyond repair, nobody will proudly say that we gave American businesses a tax break instead. We are no longer at a point where we can afford to waste time on those who contend that the earth is flat, or that there’s any doubt about man-made climate change.

Yesterday, the head of the Natural Resources Defense Council noted that while Michigan has made strides in terms of clean and efficient renewable energy, “doing more of this as part of a national effort will also mean that our kids won’t inherit a planet that is beyond saving.”

Our parents’ generation understood this better than we do. That’s why they banned above-ground nuclear testing and established the Environmental Protection Agency.

President Obama gets it too. After listing a series of alarming environmental developments, he said, “It’s not as if there’s nothing we can do about it. We can take action.”

Not doing so would clearly be the most irresponsible course of all.

MINNESOTA

MPR News (MN):

How hard will it be for MN to hit clean energy targets?

Environment Elizabeth Dunbar ·

Aug 4, 2015

An array of solar panels in Pelican Rapids, Minn. The two utilities that will play the biggest role in Minnesota's carbon reduction plan say they're on their way to meeting clean energy targets.
Ann Arbor Miller | MPR News 2014

LISTEN How hard will it be for MN to hit clean energy plan?

4min 39sec

President Obama has a plan to cut carbon emissions from power plants, but what does that mean for Minnesota? The short answer: It's complicated.

The question that remains is how much Minnesota's progress to this point has helped.

In a way, the state of Minnesota was prepared for this moment. It's been more than a year since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released its proposed Clean Power Plan with targets for each state, and some here in Minnesota balked.

That's because states like North Dakota had really low targets, while Minnesota and other states that had already been working to clean up their energy sources were stuck with bigger reductions.

David Thornton, an assistant commissioner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, said it will take weeks for his staff to analyze Minnesota's obligations under the revised rule the EPA released Monday. But so far, he said, he's encouraged.

"We think this final plan is a more balanced, fair plan, and it does a better job of recognizing the kind of work we've already done here in Minnesota," he said.

So even if Minnesota's target is as high as 40 percent, Thornton said, when it comes to the things the state's utilities will need to do to meet it — the efforts could be minimal.

"I think it will require more, but we're not sure how much at this point," he said. "But we're currently on target to be very close."

That's because in recent years, state laws have required Minnesota's utilities to change how they generate electricity. One law says large utilities must produce a quarter of electricity from renewable sources by 2025. A more recent law mandates that utilities add solar to their energy mix.

In other parts of the country, coal-dependent utilities complain about possible energy price hikes and threaten lawsuits against the EPA. But not so far in Minnesota. The two utilities that will play the biggest role in Minnesota's carbon reduction plan say they're on their way to meeting the targets. Xcel Energy's CEO even participated at the White House ceremony announcing the EPA's carbon rule.

"Implementing clean energy is familiar ground for Xcel Energy," company CEO Ben Fowke said in a written statement. He said that even if the EPA's Clean Power Plan does not fully recognize early actions of proactive states and utilities, "Xcel Energy is ready to move ahead."

Minnesota Power spokesperson Amy Rutledge says the northern Minnesota utility's goal is a mix of one-third renewable energy, one-third coal and one-third natural gas.

"We think that strategy has Minnesota Power well positioned to meet the Clean Power Plan, as well as Minnesota's greenhouse gas reduction goal," she said.

Details about how both Xcel and Minnesota Power will meet the new rule are expected as part of each utility's resource plan filed with state regulators. Xcel's is already underway, and Minnesota Power will submit its plan Sept. 1.

Environmental groups like the Sierra Club will continue its push to retire coal-fired power plants, including Xcel's two older coal units at the Sherburne County Generating Station. Xcel hasn't committed to doing that. Minnesota Power recently announced plans to stop burning coal at a smaller plant — Taconite Harbor plant in Schroeder — next year.

"We've seen widespread public support for all of our utilities to transition to clean energy," said Alexis Boxer, an organizer for the Sierra Club Northstar Chapter.

The next steps could include a combination of energy efficiency, switching some coal plants to natural gas and increasing wind and solar energy. Fresh Energy's J. Drake Hamilton, who was at the White House for the carbon reduction rollout, said it won't be hard for Minnesota to get there.

"We know how to do this, we know how to do it cost-effectively, and in Minnesota we've done it through utility collaboration and really smart energy policies that save energy and grow clean energy jobs," she said.

But some state lawmakers say Minnesota still isn't getting enough credit for taking early action.

"From Minnesota's perspective this is really the worst of both worlds," said Rep. Pat Garofalo, R-Farmington, who oversees the House energy committee. "Over the last 10 years we've already spent the money to reduce our emissions significantly, and now the federal government is failing to give us credit for the money we've already invested to do this."

Garofalo said whatever plan the state comes up with will need lots of scrutiny, and he plans to push again next year to require the agencies drafting the plan to seek legislative approval.

Meanwhile, those charged with figuring out Minnesota's energy future have a lot of reading to do — the EPA carbon rule is more than 1,500 pages long.

Post Bulletin (MN):

http://www.postbulletin.com/opinion/our-view-it-s-time-to-weigh-dmc-energy-options/article_9e7a52d8-af17-5354-b60f-fe306d58305e.html

Our View: It's time to weigh DMC energy options

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 8:31 am | Updated: 1:32 pm, Tue Aug 4, 2015.

As debate heats up regarding President Barack Obama's clean power plan, green-energy efforts are taking root in Destination Medical Center.

By embracing a plan to study energy-use options for two key districts of the initiative, the DMC Corp. board is heeding the call of many residents who want to see the city become a leader in energy policy.

The call was obvious in the first minutes of the board's meeting last week. State Sen. Dave Senjem pointed to a renewable energy policy exchange gathering he recently attended. The Rochester Republican said DMC efforts can benefit from other cities already doing similar work.

Anna Richey, the local Conservation Minnesota representative, followed up with a petition from about 120 area residents showing support for sustainability options, and Sierra Club representative Andrea Kiepe pointed to a recent Rochester Public Utilities survey indicating 90 percent of residential customers and 82 percent of commercial customers think it's important the city-run utility is a leader in alternative energy.

"The results of this survey show unequivocally that the people of Rochester and the businesses of Rochester are ready to move forward with sustainability," Kiepe said.

Such support provided a clear path for the Center for Energy and Environment. With the support of the DMCC board, the McKnight Foundation grantee will analyze existing conditions and work with local stakeholders in the coming months to identify ways to approach energy needs as DMC efforts progress.

As CEE President Sheldon Strom noted, Rochester is in the ideal position to see changes. RPU's newly updated resource plan already establishes compatible goals, and the public support is high.

We know skeptics will be quick to offer objections, but we anticipate results of other work done by CEE and through similar McKnight efforts will hold true in Rochester. "Our experience is that if you're careful and everyone works together, you can have a tremendous impact on cost-efficiency and in the long term, in many cases, it's an even lower cost to go with clean energy than the alternatives," he said.

With plans to focus on two of DMC's most visible districts — the Heart of the City and Discovery Square — we expect the efforts will embrace all potential stakeholders, including advocates and skeptics. Regardless of their initial stances, we hope all involved will be open to collaboration.

"We want to listen to what everyone here is trying to do and make sure everyone is heading in the same direction," Strom said.

That collaboration will be crucial as DMC efforts continue to transition from planning stages to implementation. While planning efforts focused on the 20-year outcome, the latest efforts are starting to look at what can be done now to ensure the best results.

How energy is used will be crucial to DMC — and community — success from the start. With the help of the McKnight Foundation and CEE, we expect the DMC energy policy will start on

the right path.

And with continued community support, we expect the green-energy roots planted last week will continue to sprout rewards for future generations.

Minnesota Star Tribune (MN):

<http://www.startribune.com/epa-rule-on-coal-power-plants-is-push-toward-clean-energy-and-efficiency/320548762/>

EPA rule on coal power plants is push toward clean energy and efficiency

By David Shaffer and Jim Spencer Star Tribune staff writers AUGUST 3, 2015 — 11:31PM

JIM COLE • ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration issued landmark rules Monday to cut greenhouse gases from coal-burning power plants, mapping out a 15-year path to increase wind and solar power, and energy conservation that Minnesota already is taking.

The final Environmental Protection Agency rules require the U.S. power sector to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent in 2030 from 2005 levels. The overall reductions are stricter than those proposed in a draft last year, but states and utilities got more time to comply.

“This is one of those rare issues that if we don’t get it right, we might not be able to reverse it,” President Obama told a White House crowd that included Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., and Xcel Energy CEO Ben Fowke.

The Clean Power Plan, Obama said, is “the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against climate change.”

Franken agreed. “I thought it was a bit of history,” he told the Star Tribune.

The rules are the product of two years of EPA development and likely face years of legal challenges. States are required to develop compliance plans by September 2018, make interim reductions by 2022 — two years later than originally proposed — and fully comply by 2030.

States may choose to roll out an array of policies that could shutter coal power plants or run them less, order utilities to build wind farms and solar energy and invest in energy conservation at homes and businesses. The final rule puts less emphasis on converting or replacing generators with natural-gas burning units, which release about half the carbon dioxide of coal burners.

Compliance is not optional. States that refuse to offer acceptable programs will have a federal model applied to them, EPA officials said.

Minnesota, which has long mandated utilities make investments in efficiency and renewable energy, is better positioned than some states to comply with the Clean Power Plan. In the final version, the EPA recognized the state’s early efforts at carbon reduction and reduced the 2030 carbon reduction target from 42 percent to 40.3 percent, said J. Drake Hamilton, science policy director for the St. Paul nonprofit Fresh Energy, which supported the plan.

“Minnesota will have a much smoother glidepath,” Hamilton said.

Over the past five years, Minnesota utilities have decided to retire or convert 14 coal-fired generating units to natural gas. Minnesota gets more than 15 percent of its electricity from wind and has long required utilities to invest in energy efficiency programs. Even so, 55 percent of the state’s power still comes from coal.

“We are probably more than halfway there already,” David Thornton, assistant commissioner for air policy at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, said of the state’s ability to comply with the Clean Power Plan.

Thornton said his agency will need several days to review the 1,560 pages of regulations, but he said the early indications are that EPA officials made the rules “a lot more equitable” among states.

Mike Bull, director of policy and communications for the nonprofit Center for Energy and Environment in Minneapolis, said energy efficiency is moving beyond lighting, heating and cooling systems. “Smart building services,” which include technology to anticipate when buildings need extra cooling, for example, “will be where the largest reductions come in the future,” he said.

Leo Louis, CEO of Louis Industries, stood on the roof of his plant in Paynesville, Minn., with some of the plant’s more than 1,200 solar panels, which have yet to generate a watt of electricity.

Leo Louis, CEO of Louis Industries, stood on the roof of his plant in Paynesville, Minn., with some of the plant’s more than 1,200 solar panels, which have yet to generate a watt of electricity.

More

Xcel Energy, the state’s largest utility with 1.2 million electric customers, recently told state regulators it plans to add 600 megawatts, or three to four wind farms, by 2020. Yet Xcel wants to keep running until 2030, but at reduced levels, its two large 1970s-era coal generators at its Sherco power plant in Becker, the largest carbon emitter in the state.

In a statement, Fowke noted Xcel has been the nation’s leading wind power utility for 11 years straight, part of a corporate policy to increase renewable energy and to modernize or retire coal power plants. “While we expect the Clean Power Plan does not provide everything we hoped for in terms of fully recognizing the early actions of proactive states and utilities, Xcel Energy is ready to move ahead,” he said.

At Great River Energy, the state’s second largest power company serving 650,000 Minnesota

customers in 28 local cooperatives, officials are reviewing the rules' effect on North Dakota, where the cooperative power company owns three coal-burning power plants that are its main sources of electricity.

"It's time to regulate CO2 emissions from power plants — it is definitely time," said Eric Olsen, vice president and general counsel for Great River. "This rule may not be the best rule, but we've already been sitting down with Minnesota and North Dakota officials to talk."

In Washington, the national emissions standards have been a simmering source of controversy and business lobbying for well over a year.

The power industry and its allies said the rule will bring economic harm and cost jobs.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, whose members rely heavily on coal-based electricity, said its study projected a 10 percent hike in the price of -electricity with the loss of 1.2 million jobs by 2021.

Consumer Energy Alliance President David Holt, whose coalition represents dozens of trade groups and businesses, said "the White House failed to give significant consideration to the impacts to energy consumers."

Senate and House members from Minnesota split along party lines in reacting to the announcement.

Franken, a Democrat, called Minnesota's carbon-cutting requirements "very achievable."

In a statement, Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar said she was reviewing the new rules "to determine how they will apply in Minnesota, including the issues of credit for our state's early action and energy generation across state lines."

Democratic Rep. Tim Walz also promised to study the proposal to make sure it worked and wasn't burdensome.

Democratic Rep. Keith Ellison of Minneapolis, co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said in a joint statement with Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz., that the country needs to "undo harmful effects [of carbon] that have gone unchecked."

Democratic Rep. Betty McCollum likened the president's plan to what Minnesota has been doing for years.

But Republican Reps. John Kline and Tom Emmer see trouble in Obama's approach.

Kline said it "would cause energy bills to skyrocket for Minnesotans and all Americans who are feeling the effects of an already overburdened economy."

Emmer complained that the plan did not give Minnesota enough credit for earlier pollution control efforts.

"Not only is this plan patently unfair to Minnesotans, but it will have devastating impacts across the nation while providing little environmental benefit," he said.

Duluth News Tribune (MN):

<http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/news/3810305-minnesota-power-mpca-ready-new-carbon-regulations>

Minnesota Power, MPCA ready for new carbon regulations

By John Myers on Aug 3, 2015 at 10:00 p.m.

In regulations surely to be challenged in court by coal-heavy states and utilities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is ordering coal and oil-fired power plants to cut carbon by 32 percent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

That's more than the 30 percent cut initially unveiled when the rule was proposed last year. They become the first ever U.S. carbon limits.

"Climate change is not a problem for another generation. Not anymore," Obama said in a video heralding the new rule, later adding in person that "this plan begins with cutting carbon pollution by changing the way we use energy — using less dirty energy, using more clean energy, wasting less energy throughout our economy."

Opponents said the plan, first unveiled in mid-2014 and now final, pending litigation, will lead to higher electric bills and lost jobs, especially in rural areas.

"The president once again demonstrated his lack of empathy for hard-working Americans across the country who first and foremost wish to secure a robust economic future. Instead of putting their priorities first, the president shamefully put his political legacy first," said Mike Duncan, CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity.

The plan calls for a state-by-state cap and reduction effort for carbon pollution created when fossil fuels are burned. State agencies and utilities would be able to develop their own plans on how to meet the federal carbon cut goal. And the feds establish a way for state to trade carbon credits.

The final plans give states until 2022 to comply, an extra two years compared to last year's initial proposal.

Because the regulation requires states to submit their plans to the EPA, it's not clear what will happen if Republican governors don't comply. The carbon rule allows the EPA to create and impose plans for states that refuse, but it is unclear how the federal government would force compliance. Some governors, including Wisconsin's Scott Walker, already have threatened to take legal action to stop the federal plan.

Both Minnesota regulators and utilities say the state already is poised to reach those cuts, thanks to state laws requiring utilities to move away from coal to cleaner sources such as natural gas, wind and solar energy.

"We think they've improved the plan. We think they give more credit to states that have already done a lot to reduce carbon emission, like Minnesota. And that's good," said David Thornton, assistant commissioner for air policy for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Thornton said an early MPCA analysis of the final rule shows Minnesota will need to cut carbon by a little less than the 42 percent originally expected under the proposed rule. He said the state must submit a preliminary plan to the feds in just 13 months — likely a mix of displacing coal with natural gas and renewable energy "and conservation, which is still the cheapest source of energy," he noted.

Duluth-based Minnesota Power says it's well on the way to meeting the federal goal. The utility, which was nearly 95 percent dependent on coal as recently as 2005, is moving with its Energy Forward plan to cut coal to 33 percent of generation by 2030, with another third from natural gas and a third from renewable sources such as wind, solar and hydro.

Julie Pierce, director of power supply for Minnesota Power, said early calculations show the Energy Forward effort will "get us into the ballpark, if not right on baseline" of meeting the federal carbon cuts. The company in recent years has moved to idle small coal plants, convert some coal to natural gas, increase wind generation in North Dakota and contract-buy large amounts of hydropower from Canada.

Coal-fired power plants emit about one-third of all carbon emissions in the U.S. and are the single largest source. Obama said Monday that the rule, when fully in effect, will have the same effect as taking 166 million cars off the road.

The vast majority of scientists who study the issue say it is human-caused greenhouse gases that are spurring unprecedented climate change, raising air, ocean and even Lake Superior temperatures, which threaten the environment and human communities. Without major reductions in emissions, experts say carbon levels in the atmosphere, as well as global temperatures, could increase to levels within a few decades from which the planet may not fully recover.

Environmentalists hailed the Obama administration's effort to act on a major issue that Congress has been unwilling or unable to reach consensus on, saying it will spur progress at December's United Nations climate-change conference.

"This really could be the single largest step taken by anyone to combat climate change so far," said J. Drake Hamilton, science and policy director Minnesota-based Fresh Energy, in advance of the final rule. "Especially heading into the discussions in December on a world stage."

In Duluth, a coalition of clean energy, environmental and social justice leaders praised the EPA effort as healthier, not just for the planet but for people. The EPA says the rule will reduce smoke that spurs 3,600 premature deaths, 90,000 asthma cases and 1,700 heart attacks each year.

"Children, seniors and low-income families in our Minnesota communities have been disproportionately affected over the years by carbon emissions from industry and coal-burning plants," said Rev. Dr. David A. Bard, pastor of Duluth's First United Methodist Church. "We must make sure people from all walks of life are protected as Minnesotans work together to cut this harmful pollution."

Others said it will help spur jobs in new, local industries instead of exporting energy payments to coal producing states.

"The clean energy sector has already grown more than 78 percent since 2000 and created more than 15,000 jobs for hard-working Minnesotans," said Bret Pence, a program specialist at Ecolibrium3, a Duluth-based energy conservation group. "If we maximize our clean energy potential, Minnesota could create more than 35,000 new jobs and over \$2 billion in wages over the next 15 years."

While critics have said the rule will lead to higher utility prices, Obama on Monday said the change will eventually reduce the average homeowner's electric bill by about \$85 per year.

Despite the Northland's often frigid winters, global temperatures were at or near all-time highs in 2014 and so far in 2015, according to NASA data. In addition to long-term higher temperatures, many experts say a warmer climate will lead to increased droughts, but also increased mega-storms that cause floods. Regional weather data already appear to be showing that more of our annual rainfall is coming in large storms rather than gentle rainfalls. Some scientists are concerned that some species of trees, fish and animals — such as spruce, lake trout and moose — already are being pushed north, out of Minnesota, as a result of the warmer climate.

PENNSYLVANIA

-

The Morning Call (PA):

<http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/mc-obama-climate-change-pa-impact-20150803-story.html>

Pennsylvania emissions target to be more stringent than U.S. average under Obama climate change regs

emissions

By Laura Olson

Of The Morning Call

— Pennsylvania power plants will be required to reduce their carbon emissions by nearly 35 percent by 2030 under controversial climate-change regulations the Obama administration released Monday, according to an analysis by The Morning Call.

That's a slightly tougher requirement for the commonwealth than what was outlined in initial versions of the first-ever national standards aimed at limiting carbon pollution. States also will have additional time to meet those goals under the final version.

How exactly Pennsylvania will reach that target, though, will be the subject of debate over the next year or longer, as states craft individualized plans aimed at slashing national emissions levels by 32 percent on average compared with 2005 levels.

Obama's climate change limits create winners, losers

Local energy companies issued cautious statements in response Monday, saying they will spend the coming weeks and months sifting through the final language to determine how the rules will affect their businesses and the energy prices paid by consumers.

"In terms of electricity prices, it is really too soon to say at this point," said Stephanie Walton, spokeswoman for Met-Ed parent First Energy. "There are so many factors that impact electricity."

In unveiling the historic regulations, President Barack Obama offered a moral argument, describing the push to reduce carbon pollution as necessary to protect the economy, security and public health of the country and its future generations. Those changes would ultimately save consumers money on their utility bills, the administration says.

But his plan faces opposition from business leaders and Republicans, who argue that its requirements will cause rising energy prices and the possibility of reliability issues if coal-fired plants must be shuttered before alternative sources are able to replace that electricity.

States will have flexibility in how they meet the emission rule's requirements. Officials will have until September 2016 to submit plans to federal regulators detailing how they will ensure power plants meet the requirements, but they can request extensions of up to two additional years.

Gov. Tom Wolf welcomed the new rules, saying he will work with the Legislature, industry leaders and the general public to implement them in a fair and flexible way.

"Today's plan sets ambitious but achievable goals for reducing carbon emissions statewide and addressing climate change in fair and smart ways that takes into account legitimate concerns of all parties," Wolf, a Democrat, said in a statement.

A public comment period will begin next month, with hearings to be scheduled throughout the state.

The Republican-controlled state Legislature also will get to weigh in on the plan that will be submitted by the Wolf administration, thanks to a law signed last year by Republican Gov. Tom Corbett. That statute allows either chamber to veto the compliance plan, sending it back to the Department of Environmental Protection for revisions.

State lawmakers then would have up to 60 days to review the revised plan, after which it could be submitted to the EPA even if it doesn't earn the Legislature's support.

According to emissions data released by the White House, Pennsylvania already has reduced carbon pollution from power plants by 12 percent since 2008. Administration officials pointed to programs in Pennsylvania and elsewhere aimed at generating more electricity from renewable sources, saying that the new rule would build upon those state-driven efforts.

When draft guidelines were released last year, Pennsylvania utilities said they already had taken actions that could help them in meeting the proposed emissions goals.

Asked Monday about the final rules, a spokesman for Allentown-based Talen Energy said the company will need to review the complex regulations before offering specific comments.

The company operates 19 fossil fuel-burning power plants, two hydroelectric facilities and the Susquehanna Nuclear Power Plant, a fleet that includes former PPL Corp. plants. Of those, six plants burn coal only or partially.

With most of its former power plants now operated by Talen, PPL's primary concern with the new clean air regulations is in Kentucky, where it still operates nine plants.

Of those, seven burn mostly coal. The other two are hydroelectric. PPL announced in 2011 that it planned to close three of the plants to comply with stricter EPA regulations, replacing them with gas-fired generation.

The company has spent considerable time working with state regulators in Kentucky on compliance with an earlier version of the plan's standards, Vince Sorgi, senior vice president and chief financial officer, said on a conference call with analysts Monday before the final standards were announced.

"There may be some stricter requirements," Sorgi said. "I'm confident we will go back to the commission and work with them to find a way that meets those requirements in the best interests of all our stakeholders. I think we have in place the regulatory structures to allow us to recover the cost."

That means the state will allow PPL's Kentucky-based utilities to pass those costs along, over time, to its customers.

Pennsylvania's congressional delegation was divided along partisan lines in responding to the climate-change rule.

U.S. Reps. Lou Barletta, R-11th District, and Charlie Dent, R-15th District, responded that the regulations are unrealistic and will result in higher costs as well as job losses.

"This rule is not a sensible approach to dealing with balancing economic needs with environmental needs," said Dent, whose district includes Lehigh County and parts of Northampton County. "This appears to be more about satisfying [the president's] political base than offering a comprehensive energy policy to lower costs, boost the economy and protect the environment."

Democratic congressman Matt Cartwright, whose 17th District includes Easton and other portions of Northampton County, praised the plan's effort to boost energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources.

-

VIRGINIA

The Free-Lance Star/Associated Press (VA):

http://www.fredericksburg.com/news/va_md_dc/virginia-reacts-to-final-clean-power-plan-rules/article_3d906197-d07c-5651-9885-623a4ba493f8.html

Virginia reacts to final Clean Power Plan rules

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 12:00 am

RICHMOND — Virginia will face less stringent federal requirements for cutting emissions from its power plants, according to finalized rules announced by President Barack Obama's administration Monday.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set a 2030 target of 934 pounds of carbon

dioxide emitted per megawatt hour of electricity generated in Virginia, up from a more strict 810 pounds per MWH first proposed last summer. Virginia also has a less demanding interim target from 2022 to 2030 than what was first proposed.

According to the EPA, Virginia has a “moderate” goal of reducing carbon emissions compared with other states.

Reaction to the final plan in Virginia was mixed. Here’s a sampling:

Dominion Resources Inc, which owns the state’s largest electric utility, said it was pleased that several of Dominion’s proposed modifications, though not all, to the proposed rules had been made.

“The compliance targets for Virginia have moved in a positive direction that fairly recognizes the role of natural gas generation in reducing emissions,” said Thomas F. Farrell II, Dominion CEO. “The Administration missed an opportunity, however, to provide appropriate incentives to ensure the viability of the existing nuclear fleet that is critical to meeting the goals of the Clean Power Plan.”

Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe, was also happy with the changes.

“Based on an initial review, it appears that EPA made positive changes to address concerns my administration and I expressed repeatedly about ensuring equity and flexibility for Virginia in developing this final rule,” the governor said in a statement.

Republican state lawmakers blasted the final rules and called on McAuliffe to delay their implementation because of the likelihood they will be challenged in court. “No area of the Commonwealth has felt the effects of the Obama–Clinton–McAuliffe war on coal more than Southwest Virginia. These regulations are another striking blow to our way of life,” said Del. Terry Kilgore, a lawmaker from southwest Virginia.

Environmental groups praised the final rules, and said the Clean Power Plan will help create jobs in addition to cleaning up the environment.

“We have the potential to attract new businesses to our states and to create thousands of good-paying, local jobs by producing power from cleaner sources like solar and wind,” said Southern Environmental Law Center Senior Attorney Frank Rambo.

Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA):

http://www.richmond.com/opinion/our-opinion/article_a97d576c-85b6-5292-b64e-dc78097a8a73.html

Editorial: How should Virginia meet its carbon goals?

Posted: Monday, August 3, 2015 10:30 pm

The EPA's release of its final rules for the Clean Power Plan presents Virginia with an important question: how best to comply with a federal demand to slash carbon emissions from the energy sector.

There is no question about whether the state will comply. If it doesn't, then Washington will impose a compliance regime on the state from above. Nobody seems to think that's the best answer. And the state cannot simply defy the Environmental Protection Agency, which has the Supreme Court's imprimatur to impose carbon restrictions. Nor should it even try to: Carbon dioxide emissions impose uncompensated costs on the public that should be internalized by power companies' customers and shareholders. (We'd prefer to see that done through a carbon tax, but the EPA didn't ask us.)

This leaves two possibilities. Virginia can adopt its own carbon-reduction program, or it can join other states that already have developed one.

Considerable dispute has arisen over how much compliance might cost. The State Corporation Commission has warned compliance would cost Virginia billions and raise utility customers' bills "substantially." Environmental groups naturally disagree, arguing that while rates might rise, customer bills would fall as the result of improved energy efficiency. Moreover, the Natural Resources Defense Council contends the state "is already 80 percent of the way toward achieving" its carbon target. "The remaining 20 percent can be achieved by pressing ahead with already established state goals to improve energy efficiency and renewable power."

Perhaps — though the cost curve for pollution reduction is often asymptotic rather than linear. It's a lot easier to pick up the first big shards of a broken drinking glass than it is to get the last tiny sliver.

Another option might involve joining the RGGI — the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. It's a compact of nine northeastern states (10, before New Jersey dropped out) that created a region-wide carbon market. In essence, the RGGI is a cap-and-trade system: It sets a cap on the total regional carbon emissions from power plants each year, and requires power companies to purchase emission allowances, on a per-ton basis. Companies can buy and sell allowances.

The system takes advantage of economies of scale. A clean, efficient generator can buy more credits than it needs, and then sell some to a less efficient, dirtier producer for a profit. But the less efficient producer still comes out ahead whenever buying the allowances costs less than the producer would have to pay to upgrade its equipment.

Over time, the cap gets ratcheted downward, which drives the price of the credits up. Companies have a greater incentive to reduce emissions but retain the freedom to find creative and innovative ways of doing that.

Originally a conservative idea, cap-and-trade has fallen out of favor with Republicans since Democrats began to embrace it. But it still makes sense, at least on a general level. And it seems to work for the RGGI states: According to at least one analysis, the caps set under RGGI are low enough to comply with the EPA's clean-power plan, and the same would be true for Virginia if it joined the compact.

Proponents of joining RGGI claim doing so would bring Virginia many economic benefits, not least among them a stream of revenue from the sale of carbon allowances that could be plowed back into important projects. Last year Republican Del. Ron Villanueva introduced legislation that would have had the commonwealth join the RGGI and use the proceeds (a) to help coastal areas adapt to sea-level rise — Norfolk alone faces a potential billion-dollar bill in that regard — and (b) to subsidize energy efficiency efforts across the state. The bill was tabled in committee, though it likely will return next year.

But there are downsides. Among others, the EPA might not accept participation in the RGGI as a substitute for Virginia creating a full-blown compliance regime of its own. Moreover, Virginia might not be able to join RGGI without bringing other states in along with it.

Politically, the most potent downside could be the blow to Dominion. Research on RGGI by the Analysis Group finds that while the program has produced putative economic benefits overall, and that power companies recover their compliance costs in the short run, “in the long run ... RGGI-driven energy efficiency leads to lower demand for output from power plants as a whole, which ends up eroding (their) owners' electric market revenues.” In plain English, that means joining RGGI could hurt Dominion's bottom line.

What's good for Dominion, however, is not always what's good for Virginia. The commonwealth has to comply with the CPP one way or another. The only question is which approach is best. So far, joining RGGI seems to offer the most upside.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin State Journal:

http://host.madison.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/scott-walker-blasts-obama-clean-power-plan-won-t-say/article_2e68afbf-62bf-5922-b83f-ff6839aae4de.html

Scott Walker blasts Obama clean power plan, won't say if climate change tied to human activity

7 hours ago • By Mark Sommerhauser |

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential candidates dismissed the dominance of Donald Trump in early primary polling, scrambling to position thems... Read more

Scott Walker compares Koch donor conference to prior tea party rallies

Both groups are motivated by frustration with politics and desire to see the country improved, Walker said. Read more

Three billionaires, including Chicago Cubs owners, top donor list for Scott Walker super PAC

Three billionaires are the top contributors to a super PAC aligned with Gov. Scott Walker's presidential campaign. Read more

Gov. Scott Walker slammed President Barack Obama's plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions at a rapid-fire Republican presidential candidate forum Monday, while side-stepping a question on whether he believes climate change is related to human activity.

Walker was one of 14 candidates to appear at the Voters First Forum at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H. It was the first of two events — the second being the first Republican presidential debate Thursday — at which the candidates will start to appear in the same setting, giving voters a chance to compare them.

Walker was asked about Obama's announcement, made earlier Monday, that his administration will implement a "Clean Power Plan" to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Walker pounced on the proposal, dubbing it a "costly power plan."

"It would be like a buzzsaw to the nation's economy," Walker said of the proposal.

Walker didn't respond to the first part of the question, in which he was asked if he thinks climate change is related to human activity.

His campaign later responded to an email inquiry posing the same question:

"Governor Walker believes facts have shown that there has not been any measurable warming in the last 15 or 20 years," spokeswoman AshLee Strong said.

Asked if he would raise the retirement age for Social Security, Walker said he wouldn't make changes for those at or approaching retirement age but would support changes for younger generations. He didn't specify what the changes would be.

"For my generation and those younger, yeah, we're going to have to make some reforms going forward," Walker said.

The Voters First Forum was sponsored by various media outlets in the early presidential states of New Hampshire, Iowa and South Carolina.

Candidates filed onto the stage, one by one, to field questions individually from a moderator at the forum. Each candidate received just a few minutes to answer.

Obama's power plan aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants in the United States by about one-third within 15 years. It relies heavily on wind and solar energy, among other renewable resources, to accomplish the goal.

Walker said at the forum that Wisconsin, in particular, would be "devastated" by the plan.

"I'm an Eagle Scout. We were taught a long time ago, your campsite should be cleaner when you leave than when you find it," Walker said. "I want to balance a sustainable environment with a sustainable economy.

"But the two have to go hand in hand."

Conspicuously absent from Monday's forum was businessman Donald Trump, who has led many recent national polls of the GOP field. Trump "declined to participate," according to the New Hampshire Union Leader, one of the event's sponsors. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore also did not take part.

Trump is expected to participate in Thursday's presidential debate, which will offer the most extensive opportunity yet for voters to see most of the GOP candidates.

The debate will be held in Cleveland and sponsored by FOX News and Facebook. It will include the top 10 candidates as determined by an average of the five most recent national polls.

Daily Union (WI):

http://www.dailyunion.com/news/article_b0937930-3aaf-11e5-b8e1-e31a8a387836.html

Walker, GOP hopefuls decry EPA rules

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 8:49 am | Updated: 8:50 am, Tue Aug 4, 2015.

Associated Press |

MADISON (AP) — Scott Walker joined other Republican presidential candidates Monday in decrying new rules from the Obama administration designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, saying they would have “devastating impacts” and cost ratepayers billions of dollars.

Walker asked Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel to join other states in filing a federal lawsuit to block implementation of the rule that Obama unveiled Monday afternoon at the White House. Schimel vowed to do just that, calling the rule an “unlawful action.”

Velveteen Rabbit 300x250 ROS In Story

“Yet again, President Obama is taking unilateral action and overstepping the limits of his authority to pursue a political agenda,” Walker said in a statement.

Sixteen states will have tougher carbon dioxide reduction targets than they originally planned now that President Barack Obama has presented his final plan to cut emissions from U.S. power plants.

Obama’s plan, which would reduce emissions 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, was met with dismay by leaders in some of those states who had supported the original proposal in June 2014.

However, environmentalists hailed the pollution controls as a monumental step toward combatting global warming.

“These historic standards will ensure that big polluters can no longer spew an unlimited amount of carbon pollution into our air,” said Kerry Schumann, executive director of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

Walker, who launched his campaign for president last month, said Obama ignored issues that will lead to higher utility costs, “unnecessarily harming families and killing manufacturing jobs.”

The new rules give states an additional two years — until 2022 — to comply, yielding to complaints that the original deadline was too soon. States will also have an additional year to submit their implementation plans to Washington.

The early version of the rule released in June 2014 by the U.S. Environmental Agency required Wisconsin to reduce emissions by 34 percent by 2030.

The new version calls for Wisconsin to reduce carbon emissions by 25 percent by 2024, gradually cutting more until ultimately emissions are 41 percent less by 2030.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in a chart explaining the rule, said the rates for Wisconsin are “reasonable and achievable because on plant and no state has to meet them all alone or all at once.”

Walker sent a letter to the EPA in December arguing Wisconsin utilities already have invested billions in renewable energy and pointing to Public Service Commission estimates that compliance could cost between \$3.3 billion and \$13.4 billion and electric bills could jump as much as 29 percent.

Walker called on the PSC together with the Department of Natural Resources to come up with a new estimate. DNR spokesman Jim Dick said the governor hasn’t established a deadline for new numbers.

The state chamber of commerce, a supporter of Walker’s and longtime critic of the tighter pollution controls, issued a statement calling the proposed rule “all pain and no gain.”

Wisconsin joined 14 other states in a lawsuit challenging the preliminary rules in April. A federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., threw the lawsuit out in June.

Emissions targets have been loosened for 31 states, but the more stringent goals for the others make the plan more ambitious than originally proposed.

Montana’s target had been to cut its emissions rate 21 percent by 2030, now that goal is 47 percent.

Wyoming, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, Missouri and Kansas are the other states among the 16 that will have to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions the most, compared to the original proposal.

Some, like Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, had sticker shock upon seeing the new regulations.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, speaking at a summit of Republican state attorneys general, promised an “aggressive legal campaign” by his state and others to fight the new rules.

“At first glance, it looks as though the Obama administration has moved the goal post on us. I am extremely disappointed by this,” said Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana. “I understand that we need to address climate change, but how we do so has to work for Montana.”

The final rule ended up with a more stringent target for emissions reductions for two main reasons — renewable sources such as wind and solar are getting cheaper and easier to build, and the EPA considered that states in some cases could easily source clean power from neighbors if they didn't have the capacity to generate it themselves.

Also, the states' ongoing efforts to reduce energy demand won't be included in their baseline measurements the way that other factors, like replacing coal plants with cleaner sources, will be.

"In the proposal we looked at each state in isolation," said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the EPA's office of air and radiation. "In the final rule we have opened it up so we could look at capacity for renewables and natural gas across the region."

"The final rule released today is twice as bad for Kansas as the proposed rule released last summer," Brownback said.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said the regulations exceed the government's authority, while North Dakota Rep. Kevin Cramer said he was looking for a judicial block that would allow Congress to repeal the rule.

In some of the states that rely less on coal-fired electricity, such as sun-soaked Nevada and hydroelectric rich Oregon, officials expressed their support and said they were well-positioned to comply.

"Nevada has been ahead of this curve for a long time," said Jennifer Taylor, executive director of the nonpartisan Clean Energy Project.

States will have until 2018, an extra year, to submit a final plan to reduce emissions. The cuts will begin in 2022, which is two years later than the original deadline.

Some state officials who oppose the rule have said they are considering not submitting a plan at all to the EPA. Any state that doesn't file a plan, or submits one that is unworkable under the federal rule, will be forced to use a federal model, McCabe said.

NEW MEXICO

Daily Times (New Mexico):

http://www.daily-times.com/four_corners-news/ci_28580936/official-says-nm-is-ready-new-power-plant

Official says NM is ready for new power plant rules

State environmentalists celebrate new regulations

By James Fenton

UPDATED: 08/03/2015 09:37:59 PM MDT

FARMINGTON — Officials with Gov. Susana Martinez's administration and a local power utility said the state is prepared to meet tighter power plant regulations — announced Monday by the Obama administration — that are intended to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

New Mexico Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn said in a email that the Clean Power Plan amounts to "overreach" by the federal government, but that the elements of the final plan, which has been available in draft form, provided few surprises.

"We've been anticipating this day for over three years," Flynn said. "That being said, as a result of Gov. Martinez's leadership in brokering the San Juan Generating Station agreement in 2012, New Mexico is now in a very strong position ... to create our own plan to meet the new standards and take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gases, all while reducing New Mexico's vulnerability to federal overreach."

Officials with the Public Service Company of New Mexico, which operates the San Juan Generating Station, said the company's proposed plan, which Martinez helped negotiate, takes into account the new emissions standards.

"We remain optimistic that PNM's proposed plan for (the generating station) will put New Mexico in a good position to ultimately comply with EPA's aggressive goals," said Pat Vincent-Collawn, PNM chairman, president and CEO, in a statement.

Vincent-Collawn said the utility's plan — which is currently under consideration by the state Public Regulation Commission — will ensure the power plant continues operations.

"PNM is committed to reducing emissions and increasing the use of cleaner resources in ways that keep electric prices affordable for our customers and ensure the reliability of the electric system," he said. "We still have to review the (Obama administration) plan in detail, but we are encouraged that EPA's emission rate for (New Mexico) is not significantly different from the proposed rule and that EPA has provided additional time for states to submit plans and for utilities to comply."

Arizona Public Service Co. spokesman Steven Gotfried could only say on Monday that the utility, which operates Four Corners Power Plant, is reviewing the plan.

"This is extraordinarily complex rule that has taken the EPA several years to develop and it's

going to take some time for APS to fully understand its impact particularly to the Four Corners Power Plant," Gotfried said.

Sanders Moore, director of Environment New Mexico in Albuquerque, said that the required reductions in power plant emissions will lead to greater investment in renewable energy.

"The Clean Power Plan is the single biggest action the U.S. has ever taken on climate and is great news for New Mexico," Moore said. "Cracking down on coal and gas while ramping up wind, solar, and other clean energy sources will protect our families' health today and ensure a safer climate for the future."

Donald Benn, Navajo Nation EPA executive director, echoed Gotfried's cautious reaction to the new standards.

"It's a 1,600-page document," Benn said. "I can't read that fast. We have people reviewing it right now."

Officials at Navajo Transitional Energy Company — or NTEC, an entity of the Navajo Nation formed in 2012 to purchase Navajo Mine from BHP-Billiton — said that they are reviewing the plan.

NTEC spokesman Erny Zah said a supplemental rule included in the plan is good news for the tribal entity.

"One of the things that is good about the plan is that there is a supplemental that allows Indian Country, which includes the Navajo Nation, to propose their own rules to meet emission standards," Zah said.

Zah said he hopes that the supplemental rule gives tribes greater opportunities to address emissions and the potential for pollution capture technologies in the future.

"It's an opportunity for tribes to examine exactly how they want to tackle this," he said. "We, as NTEC, hope that it will help all tribal partners to engage in a larger dialogue that includes both the usage of coal today and long-term planning that could engage newer technologies."

Newer technologies, he said, include coal gasification and liquefaction, which could lead the way to coal-generated power with reduced emissions, ensuring the Fruitland mine continues operations, he said.

Last fall, NTEC was awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Interior's Energy and Mineral Development program that Zah said will enable the entity to look into the plausibility of those technologies after the mine is paid off in 2017.

"We do look forward to also exploring opportunities with NTEC in renewable and alternative technology development once we realize profits from coal sales," Zah said.

Ten percent of coal profits will go toward renewable and alternative energy projects, which is part of the tribal entity's charter, he said.

Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said in a statement that the plan will provide innovation and jobs in the state.

"Today's proposed clean power rule is designed to help provide what every New Mexican wants for our children — clean air, fresh water and good health," he said. "And it allows each state to shape our own path to lower carbon emissions. I've always said we need a 'do it all, do it right' strategy to balance traditional energy with new energy sources. Let's seize this opportunity to spur innovation and job creation, strengthen industries New Mexico does well, like solar, wind and biofuels, and build a clean energy future for the generations to come."

Mike Eisenfeld of the Farmington-based San Juan Citizens Alliance said that the plan signals that area power plants and coal mines are aging polluters that will ultimately be replaced by renewable power.

"I think it's an important step forward and an acknowledgment that carbon dioxide is a pollutant that needs to be regulated," Eisenfeld said. "This should stimulate more of a dialogue in a community like ours that has relied on large-scale coal facilities for a long time. ... I offer that none of the arguments (for coal-generated power) hold up."

ARIZONA

Havasunews (Arizona):

http://www.havasunews.com/opinion/other-views-harmful-effects-of-epa-rules-on-arizona-businesses/article_34d3c590-3a3f-11e5-a7fe-276f62b335cc.html

Other Views: Harmful effects of EPA rules on Arizona businesses

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 12:01 am

By Sen. John McCain

"We'll be put out of business." That's how the Environmental Protection Agency's newest regulation was described by the CEO of Arizona's largest rural electricity providers, the Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives. That sentiment is being expressed by employers all

across Arizona every time the EPA issues one of its job-killing mandates. And as Politico recently noted, “scarcely a week goes by without the administration unveiling a new climate change initiative.”

This is bad news for agriculture, electricity, homebuilding, and other industry sectors across our state, which face mounting new costs in order to comply with these burdensome regulations.

Two of EPA’s proposed regulations, the Clean Power Plan Rule and the Clean Water Rule, are arguably the greatest threats facing rural Arizona’s business community today.

The first rule, which the Obama Administration finalized this week, would shutter one-third of the coal plants in Arizona by classifying carbon dioxide as air pollution under the Clean Air Act. When this rule goes into effect, rural electrical co-ops predict utility bills for about 500,000 rural Arizonans will jump 38-percent.

The second rule would put farmers and ranchers under the thumb of the EPA by allowing the agency to regulate a dry wash or a ditch just it does streams and other “waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act. Unless the rule is stopped, many landowners will need EPA’s permission just to build on or cultivate their property – or risk having to pay a \$37,000 fine or even jail time.

If you think the EPA won’t abuse its power with these rules, think again. Just a few years ago, the agency threatened to freeze billions of dollars in federal transportation funding from coming to our state until the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality could prove that haboobs were not the fault of farmland or dirt from roads.

Every Arizonan knows that dust storms occur naturally in the Sonoran Desert, but in EPA’s eyes, the jury is still out on that question.

So what can be done about EPA’s overreach? Senator Flake and I have sponsored legislation that would do away with the proposed Clean Water Rule, and we are building a case against the Clean Power Plan Rule following a recent Supreme Court ruling that said EPA can’t implement a regulation if it hasn’t fully analyzed its impact on the economy. In Arizona, agriculture, water, and power are our economy.

Ultimately, the American people need to join Congress in calling out the EPA and President Obama and stopping this regulatory abuse. These regulations aren’t a good-faith effort to protect public health or the environment.

Rather, they are an extension of the President’s executive action strategy to use his “pen and phone” to unconstitutionally forge a legacy—a legacy that will have a chilling impact on Arizona’s economy right when it’s starting to recover.

Cronkite News (Arizona):

<http://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2015/08/03/arizona-environmentalists-cheer-epa-clean-power-plan-utilities-wary/>

Arizona environmentalists cheer EPA Clean Power Plan, utilities wary

By Nihal Krishan | Cronkite News | POSTED: Aug 3, 2015

WASHINGTON – Arizona environmental groups cheered the final version of the Clean Power Plan unveiled Monday by the Environmental Protection Agency, a first-ever national standard that aims to cut power plant carbon emissions by a third by 2030.

“Today marks the end of an era for dirty power plants that have spewed dangerous pollution into our air without limits for too long,” Sandy Bahr, director of the Grand Canyon chapter of the Sierra Club, said in a prepared statement.

But Arizona utility companies and state environmental officials both were more cautious Monday, saying they need time to study the plan that has been more than a year in the making.

“We really need some more time to study the rule and then we’ll have more opportunity to see how this will impact us in Arizona,” said Patrick Ledger, CEO of Arizona Electric Power Cooperative.

The plan was officially announced Monday by President Barack Obama, who said action needs to be taken now to protect future generations from climate change caused by greenhouse gases.

Under the plan, each state will have a target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from their power plants by 2030. States’ final emission goals will range from 771 pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt-hour generated to 1,305 pounds per megawatt-hour.

“We’re setting fair, consistent standards across the country. And we’re giving states and utilities the time and the flexibility they need to adopt strategies that work for them,” EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said in a conference call discussing the plan.

McCarthy stressed the flexibility the plan offered states to achieve their carbon reductions as they see fit, customizing the plan to their own needs and requirements.

“States and utilities told us they needed more time than the proposal gave them, and we listened,” McCarthy said. “That’s why in the final rule ... the required pollution reductions don’t kick in until 2022. That’s a two-year extension (from the original plan).”

Earlier versions of the plan would have required that Arizona achieve some of the steepest carbon-emission reductions in the nation.

Under the final version, Arizona's 2030 goal is 1,031 pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt-hour, down from 1,552 pounds per megawatt-hour in the benchmark year of 2012. That puts Arizona about in the middle of the range for states in the final Clean Power Plan.

If implemented, the plan would cut carbon emissions from the power sector by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"It seems like the new plan has become a little more lenient but nothing has been confirmed yet and I know the other utilities are in the same boat as us right now," Ledger said. "It's all up in the air."

But others said Arizona has an opportunity to lead the nation by developing alternative energy sources to meet the plan.

"With the Clean Power Plan now final, the question is not whether to reduce carbon emissions from the electric power sector in Arizona but how," said Amanda Ormond, Arizona representative for Interwest and Advanced Energy Economy, in a statement from the clean-energy trade association.

Renewable energies like solar, wind and geothermal will be at the heart of Arizona's attempts to reduce its carbon footprint and comply with the new national strategy, advocates said.

"Arizona is in a great position to meet these final federal targets with solar energy projects already being planned," John Shepard, senior director of programs at the Sonoran Institute, said in a prepared statement. "Accelerating solar and other renewable energy ultimately will give consumers more stable rates, contribute to a healthier environment and strengthen Arizona's economy."

In addition to the climate benefits, supporters pointed to the health benefits of cleaner air.

"The Clean Power Plan isn't just a program to help stabilize the climate and modernize our energy sources, it is also a valuable investment in Americans' health and well-being," Barbara H. Warren, director of the Arizona chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said in a prepared statement.

She said air pollution can lead to asthma attacks, heart attack and premature death. The White House claims that the plan will prevent an estimated 90,000 asthma attacks in children and head off 3,600 premature deaths.

While officials wanted time to study the plan, advocates said now is the time to act.

"Our public officials should stand with countless Arizonans throughout our state by siding with

more clean-energy jobs and cleaner air and water by supporting the Clean Power Plan,” Bahr said.

NEVADA

-

Las Vegas Sun:

<http://lasvegassun.com/news/2015/aug/04/clean-energy-advocates-nevada-welcome-new-epa-rule/>

Clean energy advocates in Nevada welcome EPA rule limiting power plant emissions

By Daniel Rothberg

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015 | 2 a.m.

President Barack Obama sought to mark his legacy on Monday with an ambitious rule that would roll back greenhouse-gas emissions with regulations that curb emissions from power plants, the largest source of carbon pollution.

And while the rule is expected to face considerable opposition, with attorneys general preparing legal challenges and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sending preemptive letters urging all 50 governors to not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency’s plan, many elected officials and environmental advocates cheered the news.

Standing in front of the solar arrays that line Las Vegas City Hall, city officials and leaders in clean energy held a rally in support of the rule. Las Vegas City Councilman Steve Ross called it “a great day.”

“I support the state in its creation of a robust, smart, clean power plan to both reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants and allow Nevada to increase its reliance on homegrown clean energy,” Ross said, who also urged individuals to cut personal carbon use.

With the most possibilities for solar generation of any state and the third-most potential for

geothermal generation, a greater push toward renewables across the nation could expand an export market for renewables, a likely stimulus for the state's economy.

"Because of our boundless solar and geothermal, it puts Nevada in a great position to be an exporter of energy to our neighboring states as part of the definition of the regional energy market," Jennifer Taylor, executive director of the Clean Energy Project, said.

Not everyone cheered the announcement. Nevada Rep. Joe Heck released a statement saying that although he sees potential for renewable growth in the state, he believes that fossil fuels remain an important industry for energy and jobs. "To maintain our economic and national security, we must maximize all of our nation's energy resources, including renewable sources, alternative fuels, and fossil fuels, all in a way that balances economic development and protecting our environment," he said. "This plan is not the all-of-the-above energy strategy needed to boost job creation and reduce energy prices for families."

Under the final Environmental Protection Agency rule, which administration officials say incorporated 4 million public comments and hundreds of meetings, each state is required to develop a plan for reducing power-plant emissions and received individualized goals from the EPA. Nevada's goal is to reduce its power plant emissions rate from a historical 2012 baseline rate of 1,102 pounds of carbon dioxide per net megawatt hour to 855 by 2030.

The state will be asked to cut its emission less than it otherwise would have been after the EPA changed its methodology in the final rule. Paul Thomsen, director of the Nevada Office of Energy, said that although the rate is less stringent than the one that the EPA issued in its draft proposal, his office in collaboration with other state agencies will need to review the changes before developing a plan. "We really need to dig into the detail of the final rule to understand where those changes came from," he said.

Compared to other states, the EPA considers the Nevada reductions to be more stringent. However, a spokesperson for NV Energy said that it expects to be able to comply with the regulations without an increase in customer rates.

At the press conference, supporters of the rule said the state is well on track to implement the EPA regulations, having shifted away from coal-fired plants in a 2013 bipartisan legislative effort. Last year, NV Energy, the state's regulated utility, closed three of its four coal-generated units at Reid Gardner Power Plant near Moapa and plans to close the fourth unit in 2017. And with tax breaks to renewable energy projects, the state has seen more than \$5.5 billion in private development of renewables and leads in per capita solar jobs.

A statement from the White House Monday applauded Nevada for already taking steps to reduce its power-sector carbon footprint by 14 percent since 2008 and a commitment to produce 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, the Democratic minority leader, echoed this sentiment Monday. "Nevada is well-positioned to continue building its clean energy economy under the Clean Power Plan," Reid said in a press release. "States like Nevada will have the flexibility to tailor

our own programs for reducing carbon emissions, while protecting public health, and keeping electricity affordable and reliable.”

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of April 2015, about 72 percent of Nevada’s electricity generation came from natural gas, which produces about half as much carbon as coal. Renewables accounted for about 15 percent of electricity generation, hydroelectric for about 8 percent and coal for about 3 percent.

Obama is scheduled to deliver the keynote address for the National Clean Energy Summit Aug. 24 at Mandalay Bay.

West Virginia’s attorney general has already vowed to challenge the new rule and the New York Times reported over the weekend that several states are expected to join the lawsuit. It’s unclear whether Nevada would join. A spokesperson for Attorney General Adam Laxalt said his office will be reviewing the rule, but would not comment on future litigation plans, if any.

The governor, who is traveling in Europe, could not be reached for comment.

UTAH

Salt Lake Tribune:

<http://www.sltrib.com/home/2799615-155/utahns-react-to-obamas-clean-power>

Utahns react to Obama’s Clean Power Plan

By BRIAN MAFFLY

First Published 1 hour ago - Updated 1 hour ago

Environmentalists praise the president, who calls his plan a moral obligation, but critics say stricter carbon dioxide limits would badly damage state’s economy.

Utah's political leadership wasted little time in denouncing President Barack Obama's plan to cut carbon emissions from the nation's power plants.

The "Clean Power Plan," released Monday, is expected to accelerate the nation's move away from coal in favor of renewable energy sources and possibly nuclear power.

But it is "unjustified and potentially devastating for Utah and the nation," according to Sen. Orrin

Hatch, who vowed to do "everything in my power" to thwart the new regulation.

"This rule could destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs and impose significantly higher utility bills on families and businesses while producing no meaningful climate benefits according to the EPA's own model," Hatch said. "Over the last 30 years, technological advances driven by the free market have led to significant improvements in air quality. We will continue to see further improvements without the unnecessary burden these new regulations place on hardworking Americans."

The president calls his plan a moral obligation, however, warning anew that climate change will threaten future generations if left unchecked.

Touting the plan at a White House event, Obama said the unprecedented carbon dioxide limits are "the single most important step" America has ever taken to fight climate change. He warned that because the problem is so large, if the world doesn't get it right quickly, it may become impossible to reverse, leaving populations unable to adapt.

"There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change," Obama said.

Utah leaders' biggest concern is associated with the rule's goal of reducing demand for coal, which releases more carbon dioxide than any other fuel source. Coal mining is a crucial industry for Utah's rural heartland.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. Already, Obama has curbed greenhouse gas emissions from other major sources, including cars and trucks.

The final version of the president's plan imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected: a 32 percent cut by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama's proposed version last year called only for a 30-percent cut.

It also gives states an additional two years — until 2022 — to comply, yielding to complaints that the original deadline was too soon. States also will have an additional year to submit their implementation plans to Washington.

But Utah could bear a heavier burden for meeting the goals because it exports much of the power produced within its borders and relies far more on coal for its own electricity. About 80 percent of the power produced in Utah comes from the black rock versus less than 40 percent for the nation as a whole.

A key question remains as to whether Utah would get credit for the wind, solar and geothermal power it produces but sells to out-of-state utilities, observers say.

Meanwhile, environmentalists hailed the rule as a long-overdue step that affirms the nation's trend away from coal. It carries collateral benefits that come with not burning coal, they say.

"The Clean Power Plan is a chance for Utah to move towards cleaner sources of energy," said Lindsay Beebe, Sierra Club's Utah representative. "Utah's coal-fired power plants emit pollution that contributes to smog, bad air days, and haze at our national parks, hurting our health and negatively impacting our quality of life."

Beebe noted that two of Rocky Mountain Power's plants — Hunter and Huntington outside of Price — cause 40 percent of Utah's haze pollution from the electric sector.

"We can reduce our use of coal to help make our state cleaner and healthier," she said.

HEAL Utah and others say clean power alternatives will offset any job losses stemming from reduction in coal.

COLORADO

Denver Business Journal:

http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/blog/earth_to_power/2015/08/colorado-must-cut-co2-by-40-percent-under-clean.html

Colorado must cut carbon emissions by 40% under Obama's Clean Power Plan

Cathy Proctor, August 3rd, 8:07pm

You can read reaction from across the state here.

The EPA's Colorado-specific fact sheet sets out three target goals for Colorado — each representing a different way to figure carbon dioxide emissions. State officials say it's too early to know which set of calculations will guide Colorado's compliance plan.

Based on the basis of the pounds of CO2 produced per megawatt hour of power generated, Colorado needs to cut its CO2 emissions by 40 percent by 2030.

But if figured on the basis of the state's overall CO2 emissions from all sources, Colorado's target is smaller — a 28 percent cut by 2030 to get from 41.7 million short tons of CO2 emitted in 2012 down to 29.9 million short tons of carbon emissions in 2030.

The fact sheet also indicates there may be wiggle room to account for “new sources” of CO₂. And if those new sources are factored in, Colorado has to cut emissions by about 22 percent, from 41.7 million short tons in 2012 to 32.5 million short tons by 2030.

The main sources of human-caused CO₂ stem from burning fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas in power plants, and also from burning fossil fuels such as gasoline and diesel for transportation. The third major source is industrial processes, such as the production of iron, cement or chemicals, according to the EPA.

Whichever way Colorado’s carbon emissions are counted, Wolk said he thinks the EPA’s goals for Colorado will “require some work by 2030 to get there ... but we’ve been given quite a bit of flexibility and a better timeline for achieving that goal” compared to the EPA’s original proposal in June 2014.

As for Colorado’s coal plants, Wolk said he’s not sure — on a quick read of the plan — that plants will have to be shut down.

It’s more likely, Wolk said, that Colorado will need to continue along the path outlined by the state’s “Clean Air-Clean Jobs Act of 2010,” which required adding pollution control equipment to some existing coal-fired power plants, shutting down others and switching to natural gas in some cases.

“Overall, it’s pretty good,” Wolk concluded of the EPA’s final “Clean Power Plan.”

“It’s the right thing to do, because this is something that does have an impact and will improve public health,” he said.

The EPA also is offering incentives, or extra credit, along the way — such as for filing the state’s plan for meeting the goal ahead of the 2018 deadline.

Colorado also could get extra credit if the plan details how improvements will be made in poor communities, according to Wolk.

The EPA also said it wants to hear from states about how economically disadvantaged communities could be helped by the CO₂ reduction plan — meaning Colorado can help shape that area, Wolk said.

Colorado did get some credit for adding solar and wind power to the state’s electricity grid years ago — but not as much as the state would have liked, Wolk said.

The interim goals, which start in 2022, also are softer compared to the original plan rolled out in June 2014, he said.

The final plan approved Monday also has flexibility in how the state complies with the goals — such as allowing state to trade “credits” with other states, Wolk said.

Ultimately, now that EPA's final plan is known, state officials can move ahead with crafting a plan, he said.

"Now we know what we have to work with, and now's the time to pull together all the stakeholders," Wolk said.

"We'll want to hear from the utilities themselves and stakeholders who are involved with energy and utilities around the state to see what kind of ideas and innovation and change they can collectively propose," he said.

Denver Post:

http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_28578987/clean-power-plan-wants-colorado-cut-co2-emissions?source=skipframe-ht.ly

Clean Power Plan wants Colorado to cut CO2 emissions by 28 percent

Colorado conservationists say state is in good shape to meet 2030 goal, but coal-dependent communities worry about impacts

By Alicia Wallace

POSTED: 08/03/2015 02:46:08 PM | UPDATED: ABOUT 2 HOURS AGO

President Barack Obama on Monday unveiled the final version of his Clean Power Plan, a sweeping yet contentious collection of regulations aimed at slashing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants across the country.

Nationwide, the plan seeks a 32 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 based on a benchmark set in 2005. Each state has its own emissions-reduction goal, and each will have flexibility in how the targets are reached.

The final rule is tougher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's initial proposal, which sought to cut emissions nationwide by 30 percent.

"We only get one home; we only get one planet," Obama said Monday at a White House event where the final Clean Power Plan was released. "There's no plan B."

Colorado's 2030 goal of a 28 percent reduction in overall carbon dioxide emissions — or a 40 percent reduction in the pounds of CO2 emitted per megawatt hour of electricity generated — was set using a 2012 benchmark.

"Having them stick to that baseline year of 2012, we don't necessarily get credit for being early thinkers and early movers," said Dr. Larry Wolk, executive director and chief medical officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Colorado in 2010 set a goal for investor-owned utilities to generate 30 percent of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2020. Since 2005, Xcel Energy has reduced CO2 emissions by 26 percent. The state's largest utility is on track to reduce its carbon emissions by 35 percent by 2020.

Just how state regulators will spur compliance with ambitious new Clean Power Plan goals will be determined in the coming year. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is required to submit a final plan — or an initial plan with an extension request — by Sept. 6, 2016.

Monday evening, government and industry continued to pore over the hefty, 1,560-page document. Based on initial gleanings, Wolk said some favorable elements include the flexibility granted to the states to achieve the emissions targets, the ability for interstate and intrastate trading of energy credits, and an incentive for renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts that benefit economically disadvantaged communities.

Proponents said Colorado is in a good position to meet the standards.

"The goals are very achievable, given the path that we're on in Colorado in reducing (carbon dioxide) generation from coal-powered plants and in expanding energy-efficiency measures," said Howard Geller, executive director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

But there was plenty of push-back against the rules Monday.

Several states sued to stop the plan as it was proposed last year. Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman, citing concerns about potential job losses and an unrealistic set of goals and timelines, on Monday said she may join them.

Calling the new plan a "war on coal," Moffat County Commissioner John Kinkaid said he is worried about the rule's effect on the 2,000 coal-mine and power-plant workers in his county.

"We've never recovered from the Great Recession. We already have an excess of homes for sale," he said, noting retailers such as Safeway and Family Dollar have shuttered. "We can't afford any further contraction to our economy. We're already hurting."

Kinkaid said he's optimistic that officials at the state Department of Public Health and Environment will be flexible in how the state meets the goal.

The EPA projects the emissions reductions would result in "net climate and health benefits" of \$25 billion to \$45 billion. Coal and natural gas would remain the two leading sources of electricity generation, EPA officials wrote in the rule.

Coal is used to generate about 60 percent of Colorado's electricity, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration data. But some of the state's largest coal burners increasingly have been adding renewable energy sources to meet growing demand.

This year, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association announced the addition of a 150-megawatt wind farm in Kit Carson County. The Fort Collins-based Platte River Power Authority said it would add a 22-megawatt solar array near Wellington.

Renewable-energy projects are becoming more financially palatable. However, the transmission lines to link resources are costly, utilities officials have said. A 72-mile line between Wray and the wind farm near Burlington is projected to cost Tri-State \$40 million, company spokesman Lee Boughey said in April.

Others noted the plan could be a boon to the state's economy.

The American Wind Energy Association projected that employment in the industry could more than quintuple in the next 15 years to 380,000 jobs from 73,000 today.

Colorado, which has about 6,000 to 7,000 workers in the wind industry, led the nation in wind-energy manufacturing jobs in 2014 as industry giants such as Vestas ramped up at plants in Brighton, Pueblo and Windsor.

"Colorado is very well-positioned to economically benefit," said Michael Goggin, senior director of research at the American Wind Energy Association.

Weighing in

The CDPHE will involve the public as it develops plans for meeting federal clean-air goals. To get involved, sign up at colorado.gov/cdphe/cleanpowerplan.

OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoman:

<http://newsok.com/article/5437896>

Oklahoma officials voice sharp criticism for Obama's emissions rules

Minutes after the president had laid out the plan's goals, Oklahoma's governor and attorney general issued statements objecting to the plan.

by Adam Wilmoth Modified: August 3, 2015 at 9:17 pm • Published: August 3, 2015

Oklahoma political and business leaders on Monday challenged President Barack Obama's plan to reduce carbon emissions from the country's power plants, criticizing the formal rules as expensive and overreaching.

Gov. Mary Fallin called the plan "one of the most expansive and expensive regulatory burdens ever imposed on U.S. families and business leaders."

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, who already twice has sued the federal government over the proposed rules, pledged to continue challenging the plan.

The president on Monday called his Clean Power Plan the "single most important step American has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

The new EPA rules promise to cut carbon dioxide emissions 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, but interim goals must be met by 2020. Pruitt has said EPA's proposed interim goal for Oklahoma would mean a 33 percent reduction for carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 and an almost 36 percent decrease by 2030.

During a speech from the White House on Monday afternoon, Obama said power plants generate about one-third of the country's carbon emissions, representing more emissions than cars, airplanes and homes combined. The plan allows states to develop their own plans for how to reduce the carbon emissions.

"This plan reflects the fact that not everybody is starting in the same place," Obama said. "We're giving states the time and flexibility they need to cut pollution in a way that works for them."

Fallin, however, said the plan will cause more harm than good.

"The EPA's new rules will have minimal environmental benefits; they will, however, threaten our fuel diversity and lead to significant increases in utility costs across the country," Fallin said in a statement Monday.

Fallin in April issued an executive order stopping state agencies from planning for the Clean Power Plan. Fallin spokesman Alex Weintz said Monday that the order remains in place and that the governor's office continues to support the attorney general's efforts to fight the Clean Power Plan in court.

Pruitt has said the new EPA rules are unconstitutional.

“The president could announce the most ‘state friendly’ plan possible, but it would not change the fact that the administration doesn’t have the legal authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon emissions from these sources because these sources are already being regulated and the Act prohibits this sort of double regulation,” Pruitt said in a statement Monday

The rules also threaten the reliability and affordability of electricity in Oklahoma and throughout the country, he said.

“Oklahoma is suing the EPA over the Clean Power Plan because we are asking the federal government to comply with the Clean Air Act, not because we need more time and flexibility to implement this unlawful plan,” Pruitt said. “My office will continue to challenge the EPA as long as the administration continues to pursue this unlawful rule.”

Other reaction

The Oklahoma Sierra Club praised the Clean Power Plan, and spokeswoman Whitney Pearson called on state leaders to develop a strong plan for compliance.

“The Clean Power Plan is a huge opportunity for Oklahoma,” said Pearson, organizing representative for the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign.

“Oklahoma is already a leader in renewable energy development, and the state should adopt a plan that supports growing wind and solar industries. But right now politicians in Oklahoma are standing in the way of our state’s ability to write a plan to reach the commonsense goals in the Clean Power Plan.”

The state’s U.S. senators, however, expressed opposition to the rules and pledged to continue to fight against them. Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Tulsa, criticized the plan as too expensive and unrealistic. “The Obama administration has no concerns for costs, no concept of reality and no respect for the rule of law,” said Inhofe, chairman of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

“EPA’s final rule will force Americans to replace dependable, affordable energy with high-cost, unreliable alternatives, and generations of energy consumers will be left footing the bill.”

Sen. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma City, said the rules will have few environmental benefits.

“This regulation appears to be more messaging than solution, but the pain to the American consumer will be profound,” Lankford said. “The rule will slow ingenuity and Americans will notice the significant effect every month when they pay their utility bill. I will continue to work against this apparent overreach from the EPA.”

LOUISIANA

The Advocate (Louisiana):

<http://theadvocate.com/news/13083021-123/story.html>

Louisiana officials express opposition for President Obama's Clean Power Plan, fear job loss in state

AMY WOLD

Louisiana officials have gone on record objecting President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan.

Although what the impact of the new plan, released Monday by the White House, will be on Louisiana is still unclear, one thing isn't: State officials know they don't like it.

The Clean Power Plan's goal is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 at the country's power plants, but leaves the exact details of how that will be done up to the states.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality said its staff needs time to review the rule, but objections to the plan remain.

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch sent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a letter last year outlining the department's opposition: namely that the plan reaches beyond EPA's current authority.

EPA and DEQ are authorized to limit pollution from industrial sources, but this rule expands that to home efficiency and to increasing renewable power supplies beyond what the Clean Air Act authorizes, she wrote.

Opposition also has been voiced by the state Public Service Commission and the Louisiana's attorney general as well as the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said the plan would threaten good-paying energy and manufacturing jobs in Louisiana.

"The loss of these jobs will worsen their health and diminish their futures. The Obama administration's refusal to recognize this, all for the sake of possibly improving CO2 emissions by at most a fraction of a percent, is shortsighted and unfair to workers," he wrote.

MONTANA

Daily Caller:

<http://dailycaller.com/2015/08/04/who-loses-under-epas-clean-power-plan/>

Who Loses Under EPA's Clean Power Plan?

Michael Bastasch

The Obama administration unveiled the linchpin of its global warming agenda Monday: a 1560-page regulation called the “Clean Power Plan.”

The goal of the Clean Power Plan is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants 32 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2030. The EPA claims the plan will benefit the economy and the environment by reducing asthma attacks, creating jobs in the green energy sector and showing the world the U.S. is committed to fighting global warming.

All of this ahead of a major United Nations climate summit this winter.

Put simply, the new agenda is a massive undertaking, and one that's already facing legal challenges from a coalition of states and the coal industry. There are going to be clear winners and losers with this rule.

Red states, fossil fuel companies and even blue dog Democrats stand to lose out — not to mention all the families who will be hit with higher energy bills.

Is EPA Punishing Red States?

The EPA's cuts to CO2 emissions could cost states billions of dollars in the coming decades. States are forced to find ways to cut emissions based on certain building blocks set forth by EPA. But this could be costly for energy-intensive states, like North Dakota, with grids and economies that rely on lots of coal power, and oil and natural gas production.

There's another interesting dynamic underlying the EPA's rules. The Daily Caller News Foundation examined the data and found that red states were among those hit with the biggest, and likely costliest, emissions reduction mandates.

Of the ten states with the biggest CO2 reduction mandates, eight are dominated by Republicans and only two are Democratic. On the flip side, the states with the lowest CO2 reduction mandates are overwhelmingly liberal — six are Democrat and only four are Republican.

TheDCNF looked at which party controlled each chamber of the state legislature and the governorship to determine control. For example, Republicans control both chambers of the South Dakota legislature and there's a Republican governor. We considered that state Republican. On the other hand, Montana has a Democratic governor but a Republican-controlled legislature. We'd also consider that state Republican since two of the three groups looked at were GOP-controlled.

Republican states were among those that saw the highest increases in their CO2 mandates from the EPA's proposal to the final rule, [according to Politico Pro](#). Some 16 states had their emissions targets increased by the EPA, but the agency also loosened targets for 31 states.

Politico reported that while North Dakota "enjoyed the lowest emission reduction goal in the proposed rule," the state "saw that goal more than quadruple in the final rule to 44.9 percent."

"Other states saw significant increases in their goals as well. Montana's goal increased by 26.3 percentage points to 47.4 percent. Iowa's went up 25.4 points, to a 41.5 percent reduction. And Wyoming's goal went up 25.3 points to a 44.3 percent reduction," according to Politico.

"On the other hand, 24 states saw their goals reduced. Washington's declined the most, down 34.6 percentage points to 37.2 percent," Politico reported. "Oregon dropped 28.1 points to 20 percent, and New York went down 24.7 points to 19.5 percent."

Before drawing too many conclusions, it's worth noting that red states are likely being hurt the most because they rely more heavily on coal for their energy needs. These states also tend to be major energy producing states, like North Dakota, Wyoming and West Virginia.

States that rely too much on coal will have the toughest time complying with the Clean Power Plan because burning coal emits much more CO2 than burning natural gas. The EPA says it bases its reduction targets on what's "[achievable](#)." The agency sees coal-reliant states as having much more work to do when it comes to reducing emissions than states relying more on natural gas and green energy, as many Democrat-controlled states do.

The fact is that far more states saw their emissions targets reduced from the EPA's proposal last year. Even so, states are still going to have a tough time complying with their targets no matter what since the Clean Power Plan essentially forces them to restructure their electricity markets and regulations.

Is This An Attack On Fracking?

The Clean Power Plan has also been seen as an attack on natural gas-fired power, which has been made economical due to hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, of shale.

The oil and gas industry is worried the EPA's rule ignores the role natural gas can play in reducing carbon dioxide emissions — when burned for electricity, natural gas emits less CO2 than coal. The Financial Times reported that the “US shale gas is the unexpected loser from President Barack Obama's climate plan, as the White House abandons its previous enthusiasm for natural gas as a cleaner alternative to coal.”

In recent years, the U.S. has become the world's largest producer of natural gas thanks to hydraulic fracturing, which involves injecting water, sand and some chemicals deep underground to unlock hydrocarbons trapped in shale formations. But industry leaders fear EPA could harm the industry.

“With the reported shift in the plan, we believe the White House is perpetuating the false choice between renewables and gas,” Martin Durbin, president of America's Natural Gas Alliance, told Oil and Gas Journal. “We don't have to slow the trend toward gas in order to effectively and economically use renewables.”

Reports have come out, mainly with support from environmentalists and green energy backers, declaring the Clean Power Plan downplays natural gas' role in reducing U.S. emissions. Instead, reports indicate the EPA is focusing on boosting green energy instead of gas.

“With or without new regulations, gas will continue to grow as a critical source of clean energy, but EPA's rule does more harm than good,” Howard Feldman with the American Petroleum Institute told OGC.

Major natural gas producing states have also been hit with steep emissions targets mandated by the EPA. Texas, the country's largest oil and gas producer, must reduce power plant emissions 33.5 percent below 2012 levels by 2030. The state gets twice as much energy from natural gas as it does from coal.

Democratic-led Pennsylvania is also being hit with tough emissions reductions mandates from EPA. The state must reduce emissions 34.9 percent by 2030. Pennsylvania is now the country's second-largest natural gas producer thanks to fracking in the Marcellus Shale. The state even gets 37 percent of its electricity from nuclear, while coal and natural gas each provide slightly less.

Blue Dog Dems Backstabbed By Obama

What's probably most interesting about energy states being hit hard by the Clean Power Plan, is that many of them also sport Democratic lawmakers who are now put in a tough position.

North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp called the rule a “slap in the face,” according to Politico Pro. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin criticized the rule for being “utterly unrealistic.” Both of these lawmakers opposed the rule since its proposal, but now their states are some of the hardest hit.

North Dakota and West Virginia were initially given some of the smallest state emissions

reductions targets by the EPA. In June 2014, the EPA said North Dakota would only have to reduce emissions 10.6 percent and West Virginia 19.8 percent by 2030. Now these states have to make much deeper cuts than the EPA initially told them.

“Our President and his Administration think our country can do without coal, and they are dead wrong. They are in denial,” Manchin said in a statement condemning the rule.

Montana Democrats, who originally supported the rule, are now reeling after the EPA announced the state would have to reduce emissions even more than was initially proposed by the agency last year. Montana now has one of the the highest CO2 emissions reduction mandates of any state.

Montana’s Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock complained that the EPA “moved the goal post on us,” saying that while “we need to address climate change” but added that “how we do so has to work for Montana.”

The Montana’s AFL-CIO branch actually planned a press call in support of the rule, according to the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, but it was cancelled after the union found out the EPA had increased the “reduction requirement.” The group called it a “gut punch.”

Even Democratic Sen. Jon Tester was cautious in his statement on the Clean Power Plan’s release, not condemning it but also not celebrating it being finalized. Tester told the Chronicle he needed “more time to review it to ensure it works for Montana and creates healthier communities and a stronger economy.”

NBC Montana:

<http://www.nbcmontana.com/news/New-plan-more-than-doubles-Montana-s-emissions-reduction-goal/34528110>

New plan more than doubles Montana's emissions reduction goal

By KECI Staff

POSTED: 10:00 AM Aug 04 2015

On August 3 President Barack Obama announced the release of his finalized Clean Power Plan, addressing the federal government's goal of reducing power plant pollution. Under that plan,

Montana is expected to cut its emissions by 47-percent, a figure more than double the previous goal of a 21-percent reduction.

The Environmental Protection Agency's "Final Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units" is better known as the Clean Power Plan. These guidelines lay out emission reduction standards for each individual state, with an overall nationwide goal of reducing the release of carbon dioxide from power plants into the atmosphere by 32-percent by the year 2030. Under this final version of the plan, some states are being asked less than was initially proposed, but 16 others - including Montana - are being asked to do more.

According to the Associated Press, the reason for the increase in reduction goals for some states is two-fold. Firstly, renewable energy sources have become cheaper and easier to build. Secondly states are expected to be able to easily outsource clean electrical power from neighboring states if they are unable to generate it themselves.

Montana Governor Bullock expressed his disappointment with the final plan, saying that he felt that "the Obama administration has moved the goal post on us." The governor went on to say that climate change needed to be addressed but that it had to be done in a way that worked for Montana.

Congressman Ryan Zinke had far more scathing words for the plan, saying that the "'Clean Power Plan' will kill good-paying union jobs and drive up costs for Montana families and small businesses." Zinke went on to say that he would do "everything in my power to stop this bad plan and stand together with my colleagues to support American jobs."

Senator Steve Daines called the Clean Power Plan part of a war on American energy and American jobs. Daines said that "This latest round of costly regulations has the potential to increase American energy rates and cost thousands of good-paying jobs."

Under these new EPA guidelines states will have until 2018 to create and submit a final plan for reaching emissions goals. Once approved reductions would take place in a series of five year benchmarks. Estimates of these incremental reductions show that by 2020 national emissions will have been reduced by 69 millions short tons of carbon dioxide, 232 missions short tons in

2025, and 415 short tons by 2030.

You can read the full Clean Power Plan on the EPA's website [here](#).

WYOMING

Wyoming Public Media:

<http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/obamas-clean-power-plan-visualized>

Obama's Clean Power Plan Visualized

By EMILY GUERIN & JORDAN WIRFS-BROCK • 7 HOURS AGO

The Obama Administration announced final rules Monday for its plan to limit carbon emissions from U.S. power plants. While some concessions were made to critics, the final rules actually increase the carbon cuts demanded from states and will have long-lasting impacts on the way power is produced.

The White House previewed the announcement on Sunday with a video narrated by President Obama.

“Our climate is changing,” the President said, speaking more explicitly about climate change than in the past. “It’s changing in ways that threaten our economy, our security, and our health. This isn’t opinion. It’s fact.”

In the past year, the Obama Administration has undertaken a suite of executive actions to combat climate change, from proposing rules for methane leaks from oil and gas operations to cutting carbon dioxide emissions from planes and trucks. But the Clean Power Plan, which targets the electricity sector, the country’s biggest emitter, is the most ambitious. The President noted that himself in his video, calling it, “the biggest, most important step we’ve ever taken to combat climate change.”

Over the next 15 years the Clean Power Plan will cut carbon dioxide emissions from power plants nationwide by 32 percent from 2005 levels. That is, if it survives the inevitable legal challenges from coal companies and coal-dependent states. To meet that 32 percent goal, every state will have to cut their carbon emission rate (pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt hour of electricity generated) but not by equal amounts.

The graph below uses information provided by the EPA on individual state emission-reduction targets in the finalized version of the Clean Power Plan. States are ranked here by their amount of emissions in 2012. The gray bar shows the pounds per megawatt hour emitted by each state in that year; the orange bar shows the new 2030 target emission rates. The purple bar indicates the percentage reduction that target requires.

North Dakota and Wyoming have to cut their emission rates by over 44 percent, while Colorado's is 40 percent. All three have to cut more deeply under the final plan than in the draft plan released in June 2014, but North Dakota and Wyoming's targets changed more drastically than most other states. In the draft plan, North Dakota and Wyoming had some of the easiest targets to meet, with reductions of just 11 and 19 percent respectively.

In a conference call on August 3, Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator with EPA's air and radiation program, called the goals realistic for all of the states.

"States can achieve the standards in today's rule while maintaining an ample and reliable electricity supply and keeping power affordable," she said.

States don't have control over their emissions targets, but they do get to decide how to meet them. States are required to finalize their compliance plans by 2018. In writing their plans, they can pick from a number of options, including switching from coal to natural gas (something that has already been happening as utilities retire aging coal plants), promoting renewable energy, or helping residents reduce their electricity demand, among other things. Perhaps most importantly, they can also trade carbon emission credits with other states, a move that effectively revives cap-and-trade at the state level.

For Dave Glatt, who has been working on North Dakota's compliance plan from his desk at the North Dakota Department of Health, the challenge of meeting a 44 percent reduction in the state's emission rate is, "pretty daunting." He said it's going to take a while before he and the others working on the plan, including the state's Public Service Commission, figure out if they can meet the target while maintaining cheap, reliable power.

"If we can't do that, then our only option is to look at a legal challenge to get something that is achievable by the state," he said, adding that he still supports reducing carbon dioxide emissions to some degree.

Wyoming, the nation's largest coal producer, hasn't even gotten that far. In an interview with Wyoming Public Radio this spring, Todd Parfitt, director of the state's Department of Environmental Quality, said the state wouldn't make a compliance plan in response to the draft rules. The DEQ has not said what it will do now that the final rules have been released.

Wyoming Governor Matt Mead, who has already sued EPA once, unsuccessfully, along with 13 other states, said he would continue fighting the plan, which he called, "scientifically flawed... [and] damaging — not just to Wyoming, but the nation."

According to the Energy Information Administration's analysis of the draft version of the Clean Power Plan, coal production in Wyoming and the West will be particularly hard-hit by the new rule. Analyses of the draft rule showed Western coal production declining at least 20 percent. the final rule is expected to reduce production even more.

Colorado, with its diverse economy, won't feel the pain as much as Wyoming. The state is already on its way towards meeting the EPA's target emission rate thanks to a 2010 law requiring the state to get 30 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020. The state is also less dependent on coal for electricity than either North Dakota or Wyoming, as this graph illustrates.

Colorado's Governor John Hickenlooper has pledged the state will comply with the Clean Power Plan — ignoring calls from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to do the opposite.

For Ken Colburn, head of the non-profit Regulatory Assistance Project, which helps states follow environmental rules, Hickenlooper's position is a smart one. He believes all states should craft compliance plans, even if they intend to sue EPA over the rule. A lawsuit, "may succeed, but if it doesn't, of course, then the next thing the policy makers will do is turn back to the regulators and say, what's our plan B?"

And by then, Colburn said, it might be too late. That's why regulators in nearly every state are working on compliance plans right now, despite the outcry from politicians.

Wyoming Tribune Eagle:

http://www.wyomingnews.com/articles/2015/08/04/news/20local_08-04-15.txt#.VcEjflVhHw

Wyoming officials blast new power plant regulations

CHEYENNE - Wyoming leaders are vowing to block the White House's new plan that seeks to combat climate change by requiring states to lower their carbon emissions.

President Barack Obama announced the final version of the Clean Power Plan on Monday. The sweeping new regulations set a goal of reducing carbon emissions nationwide by 32 percent by 2030 as compared to 2005 levels.

Wyoming has one of the steepest challenges in the country with a goal of cutting its total emissions by about 37 percent compared to its 2012 baseline.

The regulations are the Obama administration's most ambitious - and most controversial - climate-change initiatives to date.

They order states to reduce their emissions by making coal-fired power plants more environmentally friendly, shifting to more natural-gas plants and renewable-energy resources or finding energy efficiencies at homes and businesses.

Supporters, including the president, say these steps are needed to cut pollution, protect public health and limit the effects of climate change.

But the response was much different from political leaders in Wyoming, the nation's top coal-producing state.

Gov. Matt Mead and all three members of the state's all-Republican congressional delegation put out statements saying the proposal would slash jobs, hurt the economy and do little environmental good.

"It is, in fact, damaging - not just to Wyoming but to the nation," Mead said. "I will continue to fight regulations that are fundamentally bad for Wyoming and exceed the regulatory authority of the federal government."

Even before the final rule was announced, the governor's office said it was planning to challenge the rules in court.

Colin McKee, policy adviser to Mead, told lawmakers last month that Wyoming has been working with West Virginia and a coalition of other states to file lawsuits to block the regulations.

Meanwhile in Congress, U.S. Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said he and others will push legislation to override the White House's plan. He also called on states to reject the regulations.

"There's a reason why over half of the states have come out against this mandate," he said in a statement. "Governors know that despite the administration's promise of flexibility, their states simply cannot comply with this unrealistic proposal. And they shouldn't have to."

Joining in the opposition, U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., called the plan "a regulatory attack on the West" and labeled it as "reckless and irresponsible."

U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., added that the rule "will be detrimental to every consumer's personal economy."

But not all in Wyoming shared these views.

The Powder River Basin Resource Council was among the environmental groups that welcomed the new regulations.

Gillian Malone is chairwoman of the group. She said Wyoming and the rest of the country need to reduce carbon-pollution levels to "safe and sustainable" amounts.

She also disagreed with the assessments that it would be near impossible for Wyoming to comply with the standards.

"The plan has built-in flexibility that accommodates states like Wyoming, including the option of partnering with other states, which should make adoption of the plan relatively easy," she said.

"We hope our state government can be creative and come up with a plan rather than choosing to fight the EPA."

According to the EPA, Wyoming's has a goal of cutting its carbon emissions rate from 2,331 pounds per megawatt hour to 1,299 pounds per megawatt hour by 2030. That means Wyoming must cut its emission rate by 1,032 pounds - a 44 percent reduction.

"While EPA's projections show Wyoming and its power plants will need to continue to work to

reduce (carbon dioxide) emissions and take additional action to reach its goal in 2030, these rates - and that state goal - are reasonable and achievable because no plant and no state has to meet them alone or all at once," states the EPA's fact sheet for Wyoming.

"They are designed to be met as part of the grid and over time."

The final goal for Wyoming is stricter than the proposed Clean Power Plan that was released last year. That set a goal of 1,714 pounds per megawatt hour - a 26.5 percent reduction from the 2012 baseline.

Todd Parfitt is the director of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. He told a legislative panel last month that there were be "legal, technical and practical" challenges in making just that proposed goal.

But another change from the proposed plan is that the mandatory reductions begin in 2022 instead of 2020. The EPA is also giving states more time to develop their plans.

Officials with the state's DEQ said Monday they will have a better understanding of the impact of the final rule on Wyoming once the agency's technical and scientific staff has time to fully review it.

IDAHO

Boise State Public Radio:

<http://boisestatepublicradio.org/post/obama-clean-power-plan-demands-emissions-reductions-states>

Obama Clean Power Plan Demands Emissions Reductions From States

By [TOM BANSE](#) • 5 HOURS AGO

The Obama administration set carbon dioxide limits for electric power plants Monday. The objective is to combat climate change by clamping down on power plant pollution, especially coal-fired electricity.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tailored state-specific targets to reduce the carbon intensity of electricity generation and promote renewable energy. Oregon officials said they are well positioned to meet their federal target because of increasing wind and solar power, conservation initiatives and the scheduled phase out of the one coal plant in the state.

"Hard to say whether we are already in compliance or not, but we certainly have a substantial head start toward 2030 compliance," Angus Duncan, chair of the Oregon Global Warming Commission, said on a conference call with reporters Monday.

Washington state is doing the same things as Oregon, including phasing out its only coal-fired power plant by 2025. But the Evergreen State was assigned a tougher target.

"The Northwest was ahead of most of the country to begin with. In some ways that could make compliance with the new plan even more challenging, because it's not like there is lots of low-hanging fruit," said Bruce Howard, who directs environmental affairs for Avista Utilities in Spokane.

Both Avista, which serves a broad swath of the Inland Northwest, and Puget Sound Energy said Monday that it is too early to say whether they would need to change course on the composition of their generating portfolios.

"It's a very complex situation," PSE spokesman Grant Ringel noted. He said his large utility has been "very aggressive" in developing wind farms. He cautioned that impacts on customer bills need to be considered at every step of the way.

Washington Democratic Governor Jay Inslee called the new standards reasonable and economically-viable on Monday.

"We think that these are very achievable goals for the state of Washington. In the utility industry we have ways of doing it. I am so glad the president is showing leadership," Inslee said in Seattle. "He is asking Washington to do what we want to do anyway, which is to develop new sources of clean energy and reduce carbon pollution."

Idaho got a low target for emissions reductions, but also has limited options to make reductions because there are just a handful of natural gas power plants to work with in the state.

"Idaho has one of the more stringent state goals," notes an EPA fact sheet. This even though the emissions reduction demanded of Idaho is one of the smallest on a percentage basis.

The Obama Clean Power Plan sets interim carbon dioxide reduction goals from 2022-2029 and a

final target to achieve by 2030. The final targets in the Northwest range from a 10 percent reduction in Idaho, 20 percent for Oregon, to 37 percent for Washington, in all cases starting from a 2012 baseline.

Nationwide, the power sector is the country's single largest source of climate warming emissions. However, that is not true in the Pacific Northwest where carbon-free hydropower accounts for a significant percentage of our electricity generation.

The transportation sector -- cars and trucks, chiefly -- is the biggest single source of carbon pollution in Washington and Oregon. The Obama administration's earlier initiative to require higher vehicle fuel efficiency addresses that sector. In Idaho, the agriculture sector is the single biggest carbon dioxide emitter according to data crunched by the World Resources Institute using 2012 figures.

The U.S. EPA issued more than 1,500 pages of rules and guidelines for the power sector on Monday, but it is leaving it to each state to craft a plan for how to achieve the demanded emissions reductions within its borders. Spokespeople for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Washington State Department of Ecology said the public will be consulted during the development of the state strategies.

Some states may choose to form regional blocs to provide more options and a possibly a bigger market to swap pollution reduction credits.

Already some Midwestern and Southern states have banded together to challenge the legality of the Obama carbon limits. These critics led by their state attorneys general contend the U.S. EPA has exceeded its authority.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association raised concerns about the future reliability of the grid, rising electricity prices and jobs lost from "prematurely shuttered" power plants.

"Any increase in the cost of electricity most dramatically impacts those who can least afford it, and the fallout from the EPA's rule will cascade across the nation for years to come," NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson said in a prepared statement.

Idaho State Journal (AP):

http://www.idahostatejournal.com/news/national/q-a-a-look-obama-s-climate-change-plan-and/article_481444f3-61c6-5174-81cd-c2854cde722d.html

Q&A: A look at climate change plan and its impact on states

By MATT VOLZ 6 hrs ago

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — President Barack Obama unveiled the final regulations in his plan to cut nationwide carbon dioxide emissions 32 percent by 2030. Obama touted it as a bold step to slow climate change, while opponents said it was federal overreach that will raise prices for electricity consumers.

Here's what you need to know about the impact of the new plan on the states:

WHAT CHANGED IN THE PLAN?

Sixteen states will have more stringent targets to reduce carbon dioxide than those in Obama's original proposal last year.

There are two main reasons, according to the Environmental Protection Agency's Janet McCabe: Renewable sources such as wind and solar are getting cheaper and easier to build, and the EPA considered that states in some cases could easily source clean power from neighbors if they didn't have the capacity to generate it themselves.

Also, the states' ongoing efforts to reduce energy demand won't be included in their baseline measurements.

"In the proposal, we looked at each state in isolation," said McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the EPA's office of air and radiation. "In the final rule, we have opened it up so we could look at capacity for renewables and natural gas across the region."

Thirty-one states' targets were loosened, but the tougher goals for the others make the overall plan more ambitious than the original proposal.

WHAT DO THE STATES THINK?

The Republican-led states that disliked the original proposal still hate it and are threatening lawsuits to block it.

Wyoming, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, Missouri and Kansas are the other states among the 16 that will have to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions the most, compared with the original proposal. Some, like Republican Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, had sticker shock upon seeing the new regulations.

"The final rule released today is twice as bad for Kansas as the proposed rule released last summer," Brownback said.

In some of the states that rely less on coal-fired electricity, such as sun-soaked Nevada and hydroelectric rich Oregon, officials expressed their support and said they were well-positioned to comply.

"Nevada has been ahead of this curve for a long time," said Jennifer Taylor, executive director of the nonpartisan Clean Energy Project.

Leaders in other states such as Montana, which had supported the original proposal, expressed dismay at the tougher standards.

"It looks as though the Obama administration has moved the goal post on us," said Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana.

WHAT'S NEXT?

States have until 2018 to submit their final emission reduction plans to the EPA. After that, the reductions begin in gradual step-down phases beginning in 2022 through 2029, with the final targets to be met in 2030.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STATE DOESN'T TURN IN A PLAN?

Some state officials who oppose the rule have said they are considering not submitting a plan at all to the EPA. Any state that doesn't file a plan, or submits one that is unworkable under the federal rule, will be forced to use a federal model, McCabe said.

WHICH STATES ARE EXEMPT?

Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii. Vermont does not have fossil-fuel power plants. Alaska and Hawaii are isolated from the rest of the nation's electrical grid, leaving EPA officials without the data they used to set goals for the other states. EPA officials prefer to call Alaska and Hawaii deferments rather than exemptions.

TEXAS

Houston Press:

<http://www.houstonpress.com/news/texas-politicos-rattle-their-sabers-over-obamas-clean-power-plan-7643996>

Texas Politicos Rattle Their Sabers Over Obama's Clean Power Plan

BY DIANNA WRAY TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2015 | 5 HOURS AGO

President Barack Obama unveiled his new Clean Power Plan aimed at curbing climate change on Monday. “No challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations, than a changing climate,” Obama said in a White House address.

The plan requires power plants to cut carbon emissions by 32 percent by the time we hit 2030. Of course, Texas lawmakers weren’t exactly jumping up and down for joy over the details of this long expected plan.

Gov. Greg Abbott issued a statement that pretty much said everything we would expect it to say:

“President Obama continued his unilateral executive overreach by seeking to take unprecedented control over each state's power market through his new environmental regulations. Not only will this rule result in higher energy prices for consumers, it will cost thousands of jobs. As we have in the past, Texas will lead the fight against an overreaching federal government that seems hell-bent on threatening the free-market principles this country was founded on.”

And then Sen. Ted Cruz – maybe you’ve heard that this guy is running for president — got out front with his own insightful and even-handed statement on the matter:

“The President’s lawless and radical attempt to destabilize the Nation’s energy system is flatly unconstitutional and, unless it is invalidated by Congress, struck down by the courts, or rescinded by the next Administration, will cause Americans’ electricity costs to skyrocket at a time when we can least afford it. I urge leaders of both parties, including Democrats who represent communities that will be devastated by this reckless policy, to stand up against this Administration’s dangerous agenda of economic decline.”

Even Attorney Gen. Ken Paxton (the one who is currently looking for any headline that will stop reminding people he’s just been indicted) has gotten in on the action, vowing to sue over the new regulations. (Arguably, suing the EPA has become the Lone Star State’s favorite sport.)

So why are the usual politicians rattling their sabers in such a violent-seeming matter over a plan we’ve known was coming all this time? Well, the Clean Power Plan is the first time ever carbon emissions for existing power plants have been limited. Texas, as one of the most prodigious polluters in the country, has to cut a whole bunch of pollution – like more than 50 million tons of

carbon per year, according to Texas Tribune.

While some power plant owners have already been growling and grumbling about this, it's actually doable, as Forbes pointed out last year. The Environmental Protection Agency has suggested that Texas could easily meet its goal through a combination of actions: making coal plants more efficient, using more natural gas plants, increasing the use of renewable resources, and expanding energy efficiency. States have until September 2018 to submit their plans – and the plans are designed to give the states a ton of leeway in how they choose to set things up – but Texas leaders aren't exactly scurrying to get together and start coming up with their own Texas plan. States that don't come up with their own plans will have to go with whatever the EPA comes up with for that state.

Based on the initial response from Texas it looks like the EPA will definitely be cobbling together a Texas-sized solution to the Texas carbon emissions. Now isn't that smart, being so against something that we simply turn around and let the federal agency that we have repeatedly sued design our carbon emissions plan! We can't see how this one could possibly backfire.

San Antonio Express-News:

<http://www.expressnews.com/business/eagle-ford-energy/article/CPS-Energy-ready-for-Obama-s-climate-plan-6422829.php>

CPS Energy ready for Obama's climate plan

By Vicki Vaughan - August 3, 2015

Texas utilities that have added renewable energy to their power generation mix will be a step ahead of more coal-dependent companies as the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan goes forward.

There will be winners and losers under the EPA's plan to sharply cut carbon emissions by 2022, said Tom Smith, director of the Texas office at consumer watchdog Public Citizen.

The winners will include CPS Energy, which has made significant investments in renewables in recent years.

The losers "will be those companies that are heavily dependent on coal," Smith said.

CPS Energy CEO Doyle Beneby repeatedly has said he's expected more stringent pollution rules and has planned accordingly.

"We at CPS Energy have been on a steady path to diversify and reduce the carbon output of our generation fleet," Beneby said Monday in a statement. "After final resolution of the Clean Power Plan, we look forward to working with the state to continue taking a leadership role in carbon reduction."

Geekdom director Lorenzo Gomez (left) shows U.S. Rep. Will Hurd, R-Helotes, some of the member tech companies, including WP Engine, a WordPress hosting company. Hurd was visiting with the tech community for input Monday. Geekdom says expansion will make it No. 1 Consolidating its pediatric inpatient services will free up more room for adult inpatient beds that are needed in the hospital's new Sky Tower. University Health approves \$50 million in capital upgrades State and local governments continue to struggle with rising costs connected to health care benefits for public employees and retirees. Don't blame Medicaid for rise in health care spending CPS Energy's coal plants Spruce 2 (from left), Spruce 1 and Deely are seen on Calaveras Lake. CPS opted to close Deely, the oldest coal-fired plant, ahead of schedule in 2018. CPS Energy ready for Obama's climate plan U.S. benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude closed at \$45.17 per barrel, down \$1.95 or 4.1 percent, the largest loss in nearly a month. "Everything got hammered today," said Tom Kloza, co-founder of consulting group Oil Price Information Service. The rout was sparked by poor results from China, he said. More layoffs, defaults expected as oil slides in August Broker Thomas Nyman of Parman Group said the deal closed for more than the asking price of \$1.6 million. Wolfson site sold to Maryland hotel developer San Antonio hotel revenue dampened by heavy rains

One of CPS' biggest moves came several years ago when it announced that it would retire J.T. Deely, its oldest coal plant, in 2018, ahead of schedule. CPS then purchased Rio Nogales in Seguin, a natural gas plant, to replace the power from Deely.

Smith of Public Citizen said CPS' decision to close Deely "sets a precedent for the rest of the

state because they have chosen to do that rather than spend \$500 million on retrofitting a 30-year-old coal plant with modern pollution control technology.”

At present, CPS’ coal-fired plants still represent the largest percentage of electricity generation at 42 percent, swamping renewables’ contribution of 11 percent. (Nuclear generated power stands at 25 percent, natural gas at 19 percent and other purchased power at 3 percent.)

But when CPS closes Deely in 2018, its coal-generated power will drop to 34 percent, a CPS spokesman said Monday.

The utility’s goal is to have 20 percent of its generation capacity come from renewable energy sources by 2020.

“While we have aggressively incorporated renewables into our fleet over the last few years, there is still a need to balance that power with traditional baseload sources of generation like coal, gas and nuclear,” CPS said in a statement.

CPS has long bought power from wind farms and is the nation’s No. 1 purchaser of wind power in the nation among public utilities.

CPS also has lined up contracts with solar companies to build, over the next two years, solar farms to produce a total 400 megawatts, enough to power more than 31,000 homes.

It’s also lined up partners to make various solar components. One, Mission Solar Energy LLC, opened last fall at Brooks City Base as the state’s only solar cell and module manufacturing facility.

CPS and Mission Solar stand to be big economic winners, Smith said, because “soon everybody is going to be looking to buy solar panels and racks and lighting products that are manufactured in San Antonio.”

IOWA

Mason City Globe Gazette:

http://globegazette.com/news/iowa/new-clean-power-rule-has-less-stringent-goal-for-iowa/article_8cacfd51-cfec-5d29-a411-c4f3389b3fd3.html

New clean power rule has less stringent goal for Iowa

Terry Branstad

10 hours ago • ED TIBBETTS For the Globe Gazette

The Obama administration unveiled a new plan Monday aimed at cutting the amount of carbon pollution emitted from the nation's power plants, and Iowa already is well on the way to meeting its long-term goal.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday released the final version of the administration's "Clean Power Plan," a strategy that seeks to cut by 2030 the amount of carbon output from utility plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels.

The administration says by shifting to renewable and natural gas sources, it will reduce the greenhouse gases that scientists say are warming the planet.

It also says the plan will save 3,600 lives and prevent 90,000 asthma attacks annually. They say it also will reduce energy costs when fully implemented.

The plan has drawn heavy criticism, and it will face legal challenges. But its release was cheered by environmentalists, who have been pushing the White House to work faster and more aggressively to deal with climate change.

In Iowa, state Sen. Rob Hogg, D-Cedar Rapids, said the plan is a winner for the state, which generated 28 percent of its electricity from wind last year.

"Iowa's well positioned to not only meet but exceed what this rule will require for our state," Hogg said Monday.

He added Iowa also can help other states that need renewable capacity to meet their own goals.

"This is a real potential windfall for us," he said.

But critics of the plan say it actually will raise the price of electricity, hurting businesses and individuals.

“That’s a deadly combination for the small-business sector,” said National Federation of Independent Business Iowa State Director Kristin Failor. "Operating expenses will increase as the cost of electricity rises, and customers will have less money to spend on Main Street. It’s a recipe for fewer jobs and slower growth."

Under the Clean Power Plan, Iowa would be required to cut its carbon output to 1,683 pounds per megawatt hour by 2022, the first year in which a target must be met. But the EPA estimates the state will be well below that level in 2020, even without the Clean Power Plan. Then, the EPA says, the state's output is expected to be 1,456 pounds per megawatt hour.

It won't be asked to fall below that level until 2028.

The final goal, by 2030, is 1,283 pounds per megawatt hour.

Gov. Terry Branstad's office said Monday afternoon Iowa still is analyzing the rule.

Jimmy Centers, the governor's spokesman, said the state supports diversifying the nation's portfolio but questioned how the administration could propose Monday's plan yet propose scaling back the Renewable Fuel Standard.

From: Gong, Kristiene
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 4:12 PM
To: Abrams, Dan
Cc: Bressler, Lindsey
Subject: RE: CPP News Clips: State by State 8/3 & 8/4

Hi Dan,

Here are the clips, separated by state, from some of Regions 3 and 7, along with the daily news clips of Region 1 from your earlier email (+some updates).

-Kristiene and Lindsey

ARKANSAS

Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette:

<http://www.nwaonline.com/news/2015/aug/04/obama-raises-bar-on-cutting-coal-emissi/>

Obama raises bar on cutting coal emissions

Arkansans denounce plan

By Compiled by Democrat-Gazette staff from wire reports

Posted: August 4, 2015 at 5:20 a.m.

Andrew Harnik

President Barack Obama arrives Monday to speak about his Clean Power Plan in the East Room at the White House in Washington. The president is mandating even steeper greenhouse gas cuts from U.S. power plants than previously expected, while granting states more time and broader options to comply.

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama on Monday unveiled an aggressive plan to limit greenhouse gases emitted by the nation's power plants, declaring that time was running out to thwart the most dangerous effects of global climate change.

"No challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than a changing climate," Obama said in a speech from the East Room of the White House as he announced his plan to address the planet's rising temperatures. "There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change."

Obama called the new rules a public health imperative and "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

Even as Obama acknowledged resistance from coal-producing states and industry critics to a plan that could lead to the closing of hundreds of coal-fired plants, he said it was up to the U.S. to adopt tough standards so countries such as China would feel compelled to take similar steps.

"When the world faces its toughest challenges, America leads the way forward," the president said. "That's what this plan is about."

Obama said he would spend much of August talking about climate change, including during a trip this month when he will become the first American president to visit the Alaskan Arctic.

The rules, a final, stricter version of a plan the Environmental Protection Agency announced in 2012 and 2014, assigns each state a target for reducing its carbon pollution from power plants. States will be allowed to create their own plans to meet the requirements and will have to submit initial versions of their plans by 2016 and final versions by 2018.

The cuts will begin in 2022, which is two years later than the original deadline. In 2020 and 2021, states that invest in renewable sources such as wind and solar will earn credits that they can store away to offset pollution emitted later.

The most aggressive of the regulations requires that by 2030, the nation's existing power plants must cut emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels, an increase from the 30 percent target proposed in the draft regulation. Sixteen states will have tougher carbon dioxide reduction targets than they originally planned.

Some states, such as New Hampshire and Texas, face more lenient cuts in the final plan. Three states got a pass from the EPA and won't have to reduce emissions: Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii.

The final rule ended up with a more stringent target for emissions reductions for two main reasons -- renewable sources such as wind and solar are becoming cheaper and easier to build, and the EPA considered that states in some cases could easily source clean power from neighbors if they didn't have the capacity to generate it themselves.

Also, the states' ongoing efforts to reduce energy demand won't be included in their baseline measurements the way other factors, such as replacing coal plants with cleaner sources, will be.

"In the proposal we looked at each state in isolation," said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the EPA's office of air and radiation. "In the final rule we have opened it up so we could look at capacity for renewables and natural gas across the region."

Emissions targets have been loosened for 31 states, but the more stringent goals for the others make the plan more ambitious than originally proposed. Montana's target had been to cut its

emissions rate 21 percent by 2030; now that goal is 47 percent.

The other states with toughened targets are Alabama, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The leaders of some states, such as Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, had sticker shock upon seeing the new regulations.

"The final rule released today is twice as bad for Kansas as the proposed rule released last summer," Brownback said.

"At first glance, it looks as though the Obama administration has moved the goal post on us. I am extremely disappointed by this," said Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana. "I understand that we need to address climate change, but how we do so has to work for Montana."

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said the regulations exceed the government's authority, and North Dakota Rep. Kevin Cramer said he was looking for a judicial block that would allow Congress to repeal the rule.

Some state officials who oppose the rule have said they are considering not submitting a plan to the EPA. Any state doesn't file a plan, or submits one that is unworkable under the federal rule, will be forced to use a federal model, McCabe said.

In some of the states that rely less on coal-fired electricity, such as Nevada and Oregon, officials expressed their support and said they were well-positioned to comply.

"Nevada has been ahead of this curve for a long time," said Jennifer Taylor, executive director of the nonpartisan Clean Energy Project.

Threats of legal action began within minutes of Obama's announcement. In Texas, Kentucky, Kansas, Indiana and Wisconsin, top officials said they would vigorously fight the rule, as did energy producers like Murray Energy Corp., a coal mining company.

In the coal-heavy state of West Virginia, state Attorney General Patrick Morrissey predicted that 20 to 25 states would join his suit against the government.

"Their legal foundation is very, very shaky," Morrissey said of the Obama administration.

Entergy Arkansas

In Arkansas, a spokesman for Entergy Arkansas said the company will take time to study the rule and decipher its implications.

The company continues to be concerned about the legality of the EPA's approach, said Sally Graham, the utility's spokesman.

In its analysis, Entergy will focus on the compliance timeline, the requirements the rule will impose on each state, a state's ability to choose a mass-based approach, the effect the rule will have on the country's nuclear plants and the overall effect the rule will have on Entergy's customers, Graham said.

Arkansans on Capitol Hill released statements Monday denouncing Obama's proposal.

"The Clean Power Plan effectively amounts to a national energy tax and will have a devastating impact on the Natural State," said Sen. Tom Cotton, a Republican from Dardanelle. "It will impose billions of dollars in new costs, leave us with a less reliable power grid, raise power bills for Arkansas families, and deal a crushing blow to the manufacturing sector of our economy."

Sen. John Boozman also criticized the administration.

"These new rules will drive industry overseas, hurting American workers and creating foreign factories that emit far more than we would," the Rogers Republican said. "We will fight this mandate in Congress and I suspect it will face strong legal challenges. ... The Administration has once again overstepped its bounds to enact policy that Congress would reject."

Republican presidential candidate and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee also issued a statement, saying the "job-killing EPA rule is a handout to Chinese businesses, Arab oil sheiks, Russian energy despots, and Washington insiders completely detached from reality."

A Republican official in Little Rock said the plan will hurt Arkansans.

"In 2013, Arkansas received over half of its electricity from coal-fired power plants, and if this plan is fully implemented, Arkansas rate payers will certainly see their energy rates increase," Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said in a statement. "Today's plan is simply the wrong direction and completely ignores the concerns that have been raised over the past several years about anticipated cost increases."

Even before Obama began speaking, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he would do everything in his power to combat the rules, which he said the president had crafted because he was "tired of having to work with the Congress the people elected."

"That's why the administration is now trying to impose these deeply regressive regulations -- regulations that may be illegal, that won't meaningfully impact the global environment, and that are likely to harm middle- and lower-class Americans most -- by executive fiat," McConnell said.

"It represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion," he added.

Obama scoffed at the criticism of the plan, dismissing it as the "same stale arguments" from skeptics trying to thwart progress.

"The kinds of criticisms that you're going to hear are simply excuses for inaction," he said.

If the plan survives legal challenges, it could lead to the closure of many coal-fired plants, freeze construction of others, and lead to an explosion in production of wind and solar energy.

"We're the last generation that can do something about it," Obama said of climate change. Failing to address the problem, he added, would "be shameful of us. This is our moment to get this right and leave something better for our kids."

Obama also noted that Pope Francis in June issued an encyclical on climate change, calling action on the issue a "moral obligation."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., on Monday called the pope's climate encyclical "an important new effective asset" in pushing forward policy to slow global warming.

Pelosi said the encyclical, which called for a bold cultural revolution, carried a moral authority

with the power to directly shape public sentiment on the issue and perhaps in turn influence members of Congress.

"Someone who might reject a policy initiative spoken by a government official in the United States really cannot ignore his holiness Pope Francis on this subject," Pelosi said during a visit to the Milan Expo 2015 world's fair on food-security issues.

She said the issue of climate change is growing more urgent.

"We don't want the Congress of the United States to be the last to realize our responsibility, once again, to our children and the future," she said.

MISSOURI

Fox 2 Now St. Louis (AP):

<http://fox2now.com/2015/08/03/missouri-gop-senator-slams-new-power-plant-emissions-limits/>

Missouri GOP senator slams new power plant emissions limits

POSTED 6:17 PM, AUGUST 3, 2015, BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) _ U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri is calling a new plan to dramatically cut U.S. power plant emissions a federal overreach.

The Republican criticized the final plan unveiled by Democratic President Barack Obama on Monday, adding that it could mean lost jobs for Missouri.

Blunt also says it could mean higher utility bills and could particularly hurt middle- and low-income families.

Environmental groups argued the opposite.

Missouri's Sierra Club chapter director John Hickey said the plan could protect low-income neighborhoods, older residents and others from pollution. Hickey says it could bring jobs to the state.

The plan imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits than what were previously expected but gives states an additional two years to comply.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch:

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/white-house-makes-carbon-emission-cut-case-for-missouri-illinois/article_5c252673-6852-5c7a-b20f-085083e4eb84.html

-

White House makes carbon-emission cut case for Missouri, Illinois

August 03, 2015 11:00 am • By Chuck Raasch7

WASHINGTON • While opponents are calling President Obama's plan to cut carbon emissions a pathway to higher regulation and electrical rates, the White House is making state-specific moral arguments to sell it.

Obama is expected to formally announce it Monday afternoon. In anticipation, his press shop has been churning out state-by-state data on the impact of cleaner air and renewable energy replacements it says will result from the tougher emissions standards. Environmental Protection Agency head Gina McCarthy has been giving briefings and blogging in an all-out White House PR offensive.

Residents of Missouri and Illinois will have lower-than-projected heat-related deaths and rates of asthma and allergies, the White House claims. Obama also projects beneficial effects on the states' agriculture, claiming that human-impacted climate change has resulted in hotter temperatures and more intense rainfall that has adversely impacted growing seasons in the Midwest.

"We know climate change will put vulnerable populations at greater risk – including the elderly, our kids, and people already suffering from burdensome allergies, asthma, and other illnesses," the White House claimed in a fact sheet distributed Monday morning.

"We have a moral obligation to leave our children a planet that's not polluted or damaged," the statement says.

Citing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the White House said that "10.8 percent of Missouri's adult population and 7.7 percent of children in the state suffer from asthma. The sooner we act, by taking responsible steps to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants, the more we can do to prevent impacts that affect all Americans – especially the most vulnerable."

In Illinois, the White House said, 7.6 percent of adults and 7.2 percent of children suffer from asthma.

Citing Department of Energy data, the White House said that 78 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted from power plants in Missouri in 2013, roughly equal to 16 million cars. It said that reducing those emissions will also cut other forms of air pollution, like soot and smog. In Illinois in 2013, 98 million metric tons of pollution were emitted from power plants, roughly equivalent to the emissions of 20 million cars.

Obama allies in Congress were making similar arguments for the plan.

"We have a moral obligation to leave future generations of Americans cleaner air and water, and to do something about climate change before it's too late," Rep. William Lacy Clay, D-St. Louis, said. He said lower levels of asthma, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease would occur as a result.

Critics have said the U.S. is proposing cuts that other major polluters, like China, are not committed to.

In addition, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., and others have made their own moral-based arguments, pointing out that Missouri is one of the most coal-dependent states for electrical generation. Tougher emissions standards will raise the price of electricity, he says, and those costs will be disproportionately borne by the poor and working-class people least able to afford it.

On Monday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce called the White House's plan a "regulatory power grab." Some states are lining up to challenge it in court.

"The EPA's effort to shut down existing power plants and thus drive up energy prices for businesses and consumers alike will inflict significant damage to our entire economy and reduce our nation's global competitiveness without any significant reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions," the Chamber said.

But the White House said that won't happen if the renewable energy industry steps in to replace carbon-emitting power plants. And it cites actions that Missouri and Illinois has already taken to that end:

- 22 Missouri mayors and more than 50 in Illinois have endorsed the plan.
- Missouri is already well on its way of meeting reductions mandated in the plan, with a goal of having 15 percent of its energy come from renewable sources by 2021. The state is also committed to 9.9 cumulative annual energy savings by 2020 and 1.9 percent annual energy savings after that, the White House said.
- An estimated 3,500 people in Missouri and 7,800 in Illinois are already employed in the wind and solar industries in Missouri as a result of actions already taken in the state.

IOWA

Des Moines Register:

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/columnists/iowa-view/2015/08/04/clean-power-save-lives/31092777/>

Clean Power Plan will help save lives

12:45 a.m. CDT August 4, 2015

Dr. Yogesh Shah

The human health effects of climate change are real and already being felt in Iowa.

Thankfully, the Environmental Protection Agency has just finalized the Clean Power Plan, which includes the first ever federal limits on carbon pollution from power plants in the United States.

As a physician, I firmly believe that these carbon pollution safeguards are essential for us to protect the health of our children and families. By reducing the largest source of our country's carbon pollution, we will help clean the dirty air that contributes to both climate change and public health disasters.

Infectious diseases are on the rise as organisms that carry them move north due to rising temperatures.

Mosquitoes and ticks that transmit diseases such as West Nile fever, dengue fever, malaria, and chikungunya are living longer, multiplying faster, and expanding their range.

Diseases that were formerly unknown in Iowa are now being contracted here. An example of this is Lyme disease. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health information, there were 247 cases of Lyme disease reported in Iowa in 2013, a 110.5 percent increase over the previous three-year period and the highest number of cases recorded since 2002 when reporting first began.

Not only does air pollution cause physical ailments, but it also exacerbates existing medical conditions. People with preexisting lung diseases face greater risks from air pollution than those without. These risks include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and asthma attacks — all of which increase the need for medical attention and visits to emergency rooms.

People with cardiovascular disease face a higher risk of complications as well. Air pollution can increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes, also raising the need for emergency medical attention. Moreover, children, seniors, and low income families are disproportionately affected by climate change and carbon pollution.

Children's lungs are still developing and therefore face greater risk of bronchitis from air pollution. They can even suffer from lower lung function, which puts them at risk of developing lung disease as they age.

On the other end of the spectrum, elderly people are more at risk for developing respiratory and cardiovascular problems after breathing in fine particle pollution.

By reducing carbon pollution under the Clean Power Plan we will also reduce exposure to these

other air pollutants. EPA projects that the Clean Power Plan could help avoid 140,000 to 150,000 asthma attacks in children and between 2,700 and 6,600 premature deaths by 2030.

With our abundant wind energy in Iowa, and continued growth of additional clean energy like solar, Iowa is well situated to meet the targets for the state under the Clean Power Plan. Let's continue to lead the way in reducing our carbon pollution so that we can protect human health now and for generations to come.

NEBRASKA

Nebraska Radio Network:

<http://nebraskaradionetwork.com/2015/08/03/study-epa-carbon-cutting-plan-could-save-nebraskans-94-a-month/>

Study: EPA carbon-cutting plan could save Nebraskans \$94 a month

August 3, 2015 by Matt Kelley

A study finds Nebraska consumers would eventually see drastic reductions in their utility bills under a federal plan to reduce carbon emissions.

Some electric companies claim the Environmental Protection Agency's plan to cut carbon pollution would result in much higher costs that would be passed along to consumers.

Liz Stanton, the principal economist at Synapse Energy Economics, says that's not necessarily the case.

"While some power companies are having the reaction that you just described," Stanton says, "others are looking at this as an opportunity and a great chance to invest in new technologies that will be what those companies will be relying on in the future and at a lower cost so they can charge lower rates to customers."

Stanton sees wind energy continuing to progress.

"Wind technologies are developing over time and we're seeing taller turbines, longer blades, that

are able to generate more electricity from a single turbine,” Stanton says. “There are developments in technology and we take them into account in our modeling and expect that new turbines that are built in the future will actually be more powerful.”

The researchers compared projections of electric rates 15 years from now if no changes are made versus projections under the EPA’s so-called clean energy proposal.

“For Nebraska, what we’re seeing, looking out to 2030 is that the clean energy scenario would result in bill savings to the average household of about \$94 a month,” Stanton says.

Stanton says with investments in energy efficiency, the plan would not only achieve the goal of a 30% reduction in carbon emissions, but exceed that.

Wind energy production supports as many as 1,000 direct and indirect jobs in Nebraska, with a capital investment of \$1 billion. The industry makes \$1.3 million in land-lease payments as well.

Still, Nebraska lags behind other states, like Iowa, Kansas and Oklahoma, in the development of wind energy even though Nebraska has some of the greatest potential to turn its high winds into useable energy.

Omaha World-Herald:

http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/nebraska-will-challenge-the-epa-emissions-rule-attorney-general-says/article_17ea560e-3a14-11e5-94dd-835d00bd3c6f.html

Nebraska officials worried about costs of expected Clean Power Plan Nebraska will challenge the EPA emissions rule, attorney general says

POSTED: TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2015 12:15 AM | UPDATED: 12:26 PM, TUE AUG 4, 2015.

By Cody Winchester and Joseph Morton / World-Herald staff writers

Nebraska and Iowa would need to cut carbon emissions more aggressively than previously expected under a new White House plan for U.S. power plants, and Nebraska already is promising a court fight.

Attorney General Doug Peterson said his state will join others in challenging Environmental Protection Agency rules that aim to cut carbon emissions in the power sector by 32 percent. An earlier version called for a 30 percent reduction.

“Nebraska will challenge the final rule and EPA’s legal authority to adopt the regulations,” Peterson said. “Left unchecked, this inappropriate jurisdictional overreach of the federal government will have serious consequences by driving electrical costs up for all Nebraskans across our state.”

Midlands utilities, regulators and elected officials are still reviewing the details of the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan, which was unveiled Monday.

Each state has a different target. Nebraska’s goal is to reduce carbon emissions by 40 percent between 2012 and 2030. Iowa’s goal is a 42 percent reduction.

“We think these goals are realistic for all the states,” said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Air and Radiation, in a conference call with reporters.

But opponents warned that the new rule would hurt the economy and said they will ask courts to put it on hold until their legal challenges are resolved. Many Republican governors have said their states simply won’t comply.

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts said he was worried about the plan’s cost.

“My administration will be examining these impacts before making a decision about proceeding with any potential state plan for Nebraska,” he said in a statement, adding that the state already has taken steps to use more renewable energy.

The regulations are the first national standards regulating carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas linked to climate change. At a White House event to unveil the final rules, President Barack Obama said limiting carbon emissions is the “the single most important step” America has ever taken to fight climate change.

“There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change,” said Obama, who was flanked by EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and parents of asthma patients.

States can develop their own implementation plans or work with neighboring states on a regional plan. They can increase their use of renewable energy, beef up demand-side management programs or use other strategies to hit their target.

Barring a successful court challenge, implementation plans will be due by September 2016 — although states that need more time can request an extension of up to two years. States that don’t develop their own plans will have to follow a federal version.

States may have to work a little harder to hit their goals under the final plan. Nebraska's target for 2030 is about 12 percent lower than last year's preliminary proposal. Iowa's goal is about 1 percent lower.

If Nebraska does develop its own plan, the state Department of Environmental Quality would take the lead. The process would include input from the public and from the utility industry "to develop a plan that fits Nebraska's needs," agency spokesman Brian McManus said.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources spokesman Kevin Baskins said state officials are meeting tomorrow to review the new rules.

Ken Winston, an advocate with the Nebraska chapter of the Sierra Club, said the new regulations are a "tremendous opportunity" to cut pollution and tap the state's wind and solar resources.

"We know the power of clean energy because clean energy is already taking off in Nebraska," Winston said in a statement. "Omaha and Lincoln have shown the way by their commitment to ramp up renewable energy significantly by 2016."

Mike Jones, a spokesman for the Omaha Public Power District, said district officials need more time to review the rules to understand their impact. Last year, the OPPD board approved a long-term generation plan that phases out some coal-fired power, relying more on renewable energy and greater efforts to reduce demand.

Officials at the Nebraska Public Power District and MidAmerican Energy said Monday they, too, are still reviewing the new rules.

Even so, MidAmerican spokeswoman Ashton Newman said, the company doesn't anticipate that compliance costs will mean higher rates because the company already is reducing carbon emissions and relying more on clean power sources.

The new rules elicited bipartisan concerns from Nebraska and Iowa lawmakers, however.

"There is no doubt that climate change is a real, man-made environmental problem," said Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb. "However, we must ensure a smooth transition towards cleaner fuel sources. I have real concerns that this new plan will adversely impact consumer prices and threaten access to electricity especially for those Nebraskans who can least afford it, low-income families working hard to make ends meet."

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb., said he supports a shift toward "a more diverse and sustainable energy portfolio — but this should be done in a responsible manner without unnecessary political fights."

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., said the new power plant rules represent an overreach of the EPA's authority and will take a particularly heavy toll on a public power state like Nebraska. She predicted the rules will effectively shut down many existing coal-fired power plants and increase power bills for families and businesses.

Fischer, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee that has oversight of the EPA, is promoting legislation aimed at pulling back on EPA efforts.

In an interview with The World-Herald, Fischer noted that Democrats were unable to get proposals aimed at tackling carbon pollution through Congress even when they controlled both the House and Senate.

"It's pretty clear that the people of this country don't support it," Fischer said. "It's just another step by the president in trying to rule by his pen."

Rep. Adrian Smith, R-Neb., described the administration plan as "burdensome top-down regulations" that would kill jobs and increase the cost of energy in Nebraska."

A consensus among scientists that climate change is real and driven by humans has not translated into political consensus.

All four Iowa and Nebraska senators earlier this year opposed an amendment that stated in part that "human activity contributes to climate change."

Fischer demurred Monday when asked if she thinks climate change is real and whether it's fueled by manmade activities.

"I just don't get into that whole discussion on it," she said.

Fischer said the Senate should be working on policies that help families and promote a balanced energy portfolio.

"That would be so much more helpful than always trying to bash the other side and one-up the other side," she said.

Fischer said that as a state lawmaker she supported legislation aimed at fostering more private investment in wind energy in Nebraska.

"That's the way we need to approach things, and it's not by having an edict come down from the president," Fischer said.

"Today, the administration is doing by regulation what even a Democrat-controlled Congress rejected just a few years ago," said Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb. "Like most Nebraskans who want both affordable energy and environmental stewardship, I am disappointed that the administration has acted like a super-legislature, and I will continue to work toward real energy solutions in an open and accountable process."

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, cautioned against the plan's potential to increase prices and hurt jobs. "The Obama Administration has essentially enacted a national energy policy that will most likely increase electricity prices across the country and cost jobs," she said. "Americans should have a

voice in this process through an open and transparent conversation in Congress and within our local communities. This burdensome federal mandate is likely to increase household costs for folks across the country, hurt jobs and result in a loss of economic opportunity."

Shipping and other related industries could be affected by the new regulations. Coal is an important cargo for two major Nebraska businesses, Omaha's Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway.

Last year, BNSF hauled 2.2 million carloads of coal, up 1.6 percent from a year earlier. BNSF, employer of 5,000 Nebraskans, hauled about 10 percent less coal in the second quarter of this year compared to a year earlier.

Union Pacific's second-quarter coal volume fell 26 percent, due to both lower demand and flooding in some of the areas in which it hauls the commodity. The company, employer of 8,000 Nebraskans, said last month that 32 percent of electricity generation during the second quarter relied on burning coal, down from 39 percent a year earlier.

BNSF Railway declined to comment about new EPA rule. Union Pacific didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Fremont (Neb.) Tribune:

http://fremonttribune.com/ap/state/obama-power-plant-cuts-sets-stage-for-new-debate-in/article_b7dd8d36-8782-587c-b663-bfdcc1765319.html

Obama power plant cuts sets stage for new debate in Nebraska (copy)

LINCOLN (AP) — President Barack Obama's newest push to cut greenhouse gases from U.S. power plants set the stage Monday for a debate over whether Nebraska should comply with the requirements.

Gov. Pete Ricketts voiced concerns that the federal Clean Power Plan would prove burdensome and costly to residents, while a leading Nebraska environmental group hailed it as a "flexible, common-sense rule" to reduce carbon pollution.

Ricketts said his administration would examine the impact of the Environmental Protection Agency rules before he commits to a state plan to comply.

"I am concerned that the Clean Power Plan is yet another example of the EPA handing down burdensome regulation that will impose unnecessary costs on the family budgets of hardworking Nebraskans," the Republican governor said in a statement.

Opponents in other GOP-led states have already announced plans to sue the government to block the rules, as Nebraska officials attempted to do last year. A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit by former Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning, saying the federal rule hadn't been finalized.

The final version of Obama's plan imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected: a 32 percent cut by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama's proposed version last year called only for a 30 percent cut.

It also gives states an additional two years — until 2022 — to comply, yielding to complaints that the original deadline was too soon. States will also have an additional year to submit their implementation plans to Washington. States that don't create their own plans would have to follow a federal version.

The group Bold Nebraska, which supports the plan, said it will work to mobilize the public for hearings on any Nebraska state plan.

"Creating a state plan with citizen input is the critical next step in doing our part to reduce the amount of carbon pollution in Nebraska's air," said Jane KleeB, the group's executive director.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality doesn't have a timeline for any public meetings and won't proceed until officials know for sure that they're going to submit a state plan, said spokesman Brian McManus. McManus said department officials need time to evaluate the new federal plan.

The department would be responsible for developing the plan, and a state law passed earlier this year also requires a State Energy Office review of its impact on electricity prices, employment and risks to electric reliability.

The Platte Institute for Economic Research argued in a report Monday that the plan would hurt the state economy and raise electricity costs without having much direct impact on global climate emissions.

The right-leaning, Omaha-based group noted that more than 70 percent of Nebraska's power comes from coal, and the state's electric utilities have a legal mandate to provide low-cost and reliable public power.

"Taxpayers have heavily invested in the state's existing energy infrastructure and should be considered when making sweeping regulatory changes that will impact electricity prices," Jessica Herrmann, the group's research director, said in the report.

Herrmann said officials should refuse to submit a state-specific plan, arguing that they can't make the required reductions without a significant increase in natural gas and renewable energy. Doing so would require costly transmission upgrades "on an impractically aggressive timeline," she said.

KANSAS

-

-

WBIW (Kansas) (AP):

<http://www.wibw.com/home/headlines/Kansas-governor-says-final-power-plant-rule-twice-as-bad-320532872.html>

WIBW Kansas governor says final power plant rule 'twice as bad'

Posted: Mon 5:41 PM, Aug 03, 2015

By: Associated Press; Nick Viviani

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback says the final version of a federal rule for cutting carbon emissions from power plants is "twice as bad" for the state as the original version outlined a year ago.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback says the final version of a federal rule for cutting carbon emissions from power plants is "twice as bad" for the state as the original version outlined a year ago.

The Republican governor said Monday that changes announced by Democratic President Barack Obama will force Kansas to reconsider how it responds.

A law enacted earlier this year authorizes the state's health and environment secretary to draft a plan to comply with the federal rule. It can include voluntary agreements with utilities to cut emissions of greenhouse gases linked to climate change but a legislative committee must sign off on it.

The final federal rule requires more aggressive emission reductions for Kansas by 2030.

The rule drew praise from the environmental group Kansas Interfaith Power & Light.

Here is Gov. Brownback's full statement:

"The EPA failed to adequately consider the negative impact this overreaching regulation has on Kansas rate payers, resulting in higher electricity rates and greater uncertainty in grid reliability. The final rule released today is twice as bad for Kansas as the proposed rule released last summer and requires us to review not only the rule itself but reconsider the state's overall approach to the Clean Power Plan."

-

CONNECTICUT

The Advocate Online (CT):

<http://theadvocate.com/news/13083021-123/louisiana-officials-express-opposition-for>

Louisiana officials express opposition for President Obama's Clean Power Plan, fear job loss in state

AMY WOLD | AWOLD@THEADVOCATE.COM | Aug. 03, 2015

Louisiana officials have gone on record objecting President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan.

Although what the impact of the new plan, released Monday by the White House, will be on Louisiana is still unclear, one thing isn't: State officials know they don't like it.

The Clean Power Plan's goal is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 at the country's power plants, but leaves the exact details of how that will be done up to the states.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality said its staff needs time to review the rule, but objections to the plan remain.

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch sent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a letter last year outlining the department's opposition: namely that the plan reaches beyond EPA's current authority.

EPA and DEQ are authorized to limit pollution from industrial sources, but this rule expands that to home efficiency and to increasing renewable power supplies beyond what the Clean Air Act authorizes, she wrote.

Opposition also has been voiced by the state Public Service Commission and the Louisiana's attorney general as well as the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said the plan would threaten good-paying energy and manufacturing jobs in Louisiana.

"The loss of these jobs will worsen their health and diminish their futures. The Obama administration's refusal to recognize this, all for the sake of possibly improving CO2 emissions by at most a fraction of a percent, is shortsighted and unfair to workers," he wrote.

New Haven Register (CT):

<http://www.nhregister.com/general-news/20150803/connecticut-deep-commissioner-confident-state-can-comply-with-obamas-new-emissions-plan>

Connecticut DEEP commissioner ‘confident’ state can comply with Obama’s new emissions plan

By The Associated Press

POSTED: 08/03/15, 6:35 PM EDT | UPDATED: 2 HRS AGO 6 COMMENTS

HARTFORD >> The commissioner of Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection says he’s confident the state can comply with President Barack Obama’s plan to impose stricter carbon dioxide limits on states.

While DEEP was still reviewing the final federal Clean Power Plan, Robert Klee said Monday his agency is pleased the new rules impose stricter carbon reduction targets than previously expected.

Klee said he’s “confident we can comply” in a way “that protects ratepayers and continues to build our economy.”

He pointed out how Connecticut has been working with eight other states as part of a market-based initiative and carbon emissions from Connecticut’s power plants declined 34 percent from 1990 to 2012.

Attorney General George Jepsen said his office was also reviewing the plan, but called new emissions limits reasonable.

Stamford Advocate (CT)/OK Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/business/energy/article/Oklahoma-governor-says-she-is-opposed-to-emission-6422096.php>

Oklahoma governor says she is opposed to emission cut plan

By TIM TALLEY, Associated Press

Updated 5:55 pm, Monday, August 3, 2015

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Some of Oklahoma's top political leaders criticized President Barack Obama's plan Monday to fight climate change by cutting carbon dioxide emissions at power plants, saying it would likely increase electricity costs for consumers and harm the economy.

Obama's "Clean Power Plan" proposes that by 2030 carbon pollution from the nation's power plants will be cut by 32 percent from 2005 levels. Proponents say it will keep 870 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution out of the atmosphere, the equivalent of taking 166 million cars off the road or cutting every ounce of emissions due to electricity from 108 million American homes.

But Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin said the president's plan overreaches the federal government's authority and "represents one of the most expansive and expensive regulatory burdens ever imposed on U.S. families and businesses."

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. But the Republican governor said the Environmental Protection Agency's new rules "will have minimal environmental benefits" while leading to significant increases in utility costs across the nation.

Attorney General Scott Pruitt, whose office has filed a federal lawsuit that challenges the EPA over the Clean Power Plan, said the proposal "threatens the reliability and affordability of power for consumers and business across this country."

"The administration doesn't have the legal authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon emissions from these sources because these sources are already being regulated and the act prohibits this sort of double regulation," Pruitt said.

Pruitt said his office filed a legal challenge against the Clean Power Plan because it forces Oklahoma to restructure the generation, transmission and regulation of electricity in a way that could threaten the reliability and affordability of power in the state.

Fallin said she supports the Republican attorney general's efforts to block the guidelines.

"Oklahoma, not the federal government, knows best how to protect our environment while also supporting our economy," the governor said.

Stamford Advocate (CT)/KY Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/business/energy/article/EPA-rule-denounced-in-coal-producing-Kentucky-6422111.php>

Power plant emissions rule draws criticism from both sides

By BRUCE SCHREINER, Associated Press

Updated 5:57 pm, Monday, August 3, 2015

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — President Barack Obama's plan to curtail power-plant emissions generated tough talk Monday from candidates for governor in coal-producing Kentucky. Democrat Jack Conway vowed to derail the rule in court, and Republican Matt Bevin accused his rival of hypocrisy on the issue.

Conway, the state's attorney general, said he joined in a lawsuit aimed at stopping the environmental rule when it was first proposed. Now that the plan is in its final form, he promised to continue the fight against this "job-killing rule."

Kentucky's top political leaders from both parties denounced Obama's plan, but for Conway it was another chance to show his willingness to stand up to the Democratic president, who is deeply unpopular in Kentucky. The coal sector's struggles have become a hot political issue in Kentucky.

"It is apparent the Obama administration is doubling down on policies that hurt Kentucky," Conway said in a statement. "I have challenged the president in the past and won — that is just what I plan to do in this case."

The power plant rule forms the cornerstone of Obama's plan to curb U.S. emissions and keep global temperatures from climbing.

Bevin said the "radical, anti-coal EPA restrictions" would damage Kentucky's coal industry and increase electricity rates for consumers.

He also took aim at Conway, noting that his opponent voted for Obama and accepted campaign contributions in the past from environmental groups.

"Conway has the nerve to stand shoulder to shoulder with Kentucky coal miners in TV ads pledging to fight President Obama's 'war on coal,' while standing shoulder to shoulder with environmental extremists behind closed doors," Bevin said in a statement. "It's politics at its worst."

Conway's campaign responded that he has consistently fought back against overreaching EPA policies.

Conway's legal challenges to federal environmental rules extend beyond the coalfields. Conway has joined a multistate lawsuit on another Obama administration rule critics say gives the federal government much more power to regulate farms and streams.

Kentucky is the nation's third-top coal producer, but the state's eastern coalfields have been reeling from sharp declines in production and mining jobs.

Also denouncing the rule were U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Gov. Steve Beshear.

McConnell, a Republican, said the rule would likely mean fewer jobs, shuttered power plants and higher electricity bills in his home state of Kentucky.

"Not only will these massive regulations fail to meaningfully affect the global climate, but they could actually end up harming the environment by outsourcing energy production to countries with poor environmental records like India and China," he said in a Senate speech. "They may also be illegal."

Beshear, a Democrat, said: "What is being proposed for Kentucky is disastrous — disastrous for our declining coal economy and equally disastrous for our very important manufacturing economy."

Kentucky's economy benefits from relatively low costs for electricity generated by coal-fired power plants.

Conway said he has urged Beshear's administration to stop developing a state plan to tries to comply with "this illegal rule." Doing so would be "a waste of time and resources," Conway said.

Beshear said the rule leaves Kentucky with few, if any, options to form a plan without harming ratepayers, manufacturers and the state economy.

"We will, however, continue to explore ways for Kentucky to comply with the rule should it become law, because we believe that a Kentucky-specific plan would be better than a federal plan imposed on us," he said.

-

-

Stamford Advocate (CT)/Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/business/energy/article/Obama-power-plant-rules-spark-2016->

Obama power plant rules spark 2016 fight over climate change

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

Updated 7:40 am, Tuesday, August 4, 2015

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's sweeping new power plant regulations are thrusting the divisive debate over climate change into the race for the White House, with candidates in both parties seeing an opportunity to capitalize.

To Democrats, rallying around global climate change is a way to energize liberal supporters and paint Republicans as out of touch with the majority of Americans. To the GOP, Obama's executive actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions are burdensome to business and block job creation, an argument targeting Americans' worries about the economy.

The president unveiled the plan at the White House Monday, calling it the "single most important step" the U.S. has taken to combat a major global threat.

Broad support for the rules by Democratic candidates and universal opposition from Republicans puts the parties' eventual nominees on a general-election collision course. Most of the changes Obama outlined would have to be implemented by the next president, if the rules survive court challenges.

Republicans gave little indication of what they would do differently to curb emissions from U.S. power plants, if anything at all. They cast the measure requiring states to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030 as unnecessary and costly White House overreach that will raise energy costs for Americans.

The Obama administration itself estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030, though the actual price won't be clear until states decide how they would reach their targets.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, said the regulations would be an economic "buzz saw" that would "cost hard-working Americans jobs and raise their energy rates." Jeb Bush, the former GOP governor of Florida, said the rules "run over state governments, will throw countless people out of work and increases everyone's energy prices."

Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz questioned whether climate change is really occurring.

"I'm saying the data and facts don't support it," Cruz said at a retreat sponsored by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, heavily courted donors who strongly oppose Obama's climate change agenda.

The issue has also fueled the fundraising race for Democrats. Billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer dropped \$74 million into the 2014 midterm elections for candidates who support policies to curb climate change. Despite such spending, Democrats gave up control of the Senate, lost seats in the House and suffered embarrassing defeats in gubernatorial races.

Steyer hosted a fundraiser earlier this year for Hillary Rodham Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. Clinton called Obama's power plant measure a "significant step forward" and said she would defend it if elected president. Her Democratic challengers were similarly supportive.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. Obama has already used executive actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions from other major sources, including cars and trucks.

Building on Obama's aggressive actions, Democrats have cast climate change as one in a long list of issues — along with gay marriage, immigration and diplomatic relations with Cuba — where Republicans are out of step with the majority of Americans. A Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted in March showed 59 percent of Americans said they'd like the next president to be someone who favors government action to address climate change, while 31 percent would prefer someone who opposes it.

Dan Pfeiffer, a longtime Obama adviser, said climate change is also a "litmus test" for many of the young voters who backed the president in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Some Democrats fear Clinton, if she wins the nomination, will struggle to replicate the high turnout among young people and minorities that helped propel Obama into the White House.

"They see candidates who deny the science as relics from the past not worthy of their support," said Pfeiffer, who left the White House earlier this year. "Motivating the younger voters that were core to the Obama coalition will be one of the biggest tasks for the Democrats in 2016 and climate change is one the best issues to get them to the polls."

According to the Washington Post/ABC News poll, 64 percent of adults between ages 18-39 said they'd prefer the next president to favor action to address climate change, compared with 49 percent of those over 65. However, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs and Yale University poll late last year found that younger Americans didn't hold significantly different views from older Americans on government regulation of carbon dioxide emissions

AP News Survey Specialist Emily Swanson in Washington and AP writer Julie Bykowitz in Dana Point, Calif., contributed to this report.

-

-

Stamford Press (CT)/VT Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/business/energy/article/EPA-clean-power-plan-wins-praise-in-Vermont-6422340.php>

Environmental agency's clean power plan praised in Vermont

By DAVE GRAM, Associated Press

Updated 6:15 pm, Monday, August 3, 2015

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Vermont can breathe easy — it won't be required by new federal rules to lower power plant emissions. And it can breathe more easily still — state officials say the rules will mean less pollution blowing into the state from coal-fired generators in the Midwest.

Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii are the only states exempted from rules the Environmental Protection Agency issued Monday that require other states to cut power plant emissions by 32 percent by 2030, said Chris Recchia, commissioner of the Public Service Department.

Recchia and Deb Markowitz, secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, said the EPA's Clean Power Plan appears aimed at applying nationwide policies that Vermont has been pursuing for years.

"We are in much better shapes than other states," said Recchia, whose department regulates utilities. "Finally the true cost of energy and the true value of the renewables we've been pursuing will come to fruition."

Markowitz said Vermont is "really in an interesting position here."

"We're exempt from the requirements of the new rule, but we get to benefit from its implementation," Markowitz said.

Vermont's largest source of electricity is hydropower imported from Canada. It has some in-state dams and two wood-burning power generators, in Burlington and Ryegate.

Markowitz said the rules are likely to prompt other states to mimic Vermont and other northeastern states in the formation of regional agreements to limit carbon emissions. The Northeast's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has capped carbon emissions and ratcheted the cap down year by year, while allowing states under their caps to sell pollution allowances to those struggling to stay within the caps.

Vermont has used the income to support energy efficiency and renewable-energy programs.

Monday's news about the EPA rules had Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin crowing.

"The critics of today's announcement should look to the example of Vermont where we have taken the lead in implementing the President's vision for a clean energy future and shown that doing so can be good for ratepayers and the economy," the governor said in a statement.

He pointed to the state's booming solar and wind power industries, which he said had created more than 15,000 jobs.

Markowitz and Recchia said imposing new carbon emission restrictions on states to Vermont's west is expected to result in cleaner air in the Green Mountains. Nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide, two principle components of acid rain, are emitted along with carbon, as is mercury.

Mercury, a potent neurotoxin, is deposited by prevailing west winds in Vermont's lakes and rivers. It has prompted state Department of Health warnings to limit fish consumption. Pregnant or nursing women and children up to 6 are warned against eating several popular types of sport fish caught in Vermont, including walleye, lake trout, smallmouth and largemouth bass.

Stamford Advocate (CT)/Massachusetts Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/business/energy/article/Massachusetts-officials-praise-move-by-Obama-on-6422341.php>

Massachusetts officials praise move by Obama on power plants

Updated 5:07 pm, Monday, August 3, 2015

BOSTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's decision to mandate steeper greenhouse gas cuts

from power plants may be running into opposition in some states, but in Massachusetts fellow Democrats are hailing the move.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey on Monday joined other state attorneys general and local governments pledging to defend the new rules in court.

Sen. Edward Markey called the plan ambitious and achievable, saying it could help avoid the worse consequences of climate change. Rep. Niki Tsongas also said the mandate could protect future generations.

Environmental activists like the Sierra Club, the Conservation Law Foundation, and Environment Massachusetts also praised the plan, calling it good for business and the environment and saying it will help encourage solar and wind energy.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, vowed to use legislation to block the plan.

-

-

Stamford Advocate (CT)/Texas Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/texas/article/Texas-faces-less-stringent-goals-in-final-clean-6422403.php>

Texas faces less stringent goals in final clean power plan

By EMILY SCHMALL, Associated Press

Updated 7:36 pm, Monday, August 3, 2015

DALLAS (AP) — Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton vowed Monday to sue the Obama administration over a federal plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, even though the state faces a less-stringent mandate under a final version of the plan than was originally proposed.

Under the plan unveiled Monday, Texas would need to cut emissions by nearly 34 percent by 2030. The Environmental Protection Agency had originally proposed that Texas reduce emissions by 39 percent. The EPA's broader plan calls for a 32 percent nationwide reduction by 2030.

Still, state regulators say concerns remain about how reducing emissions will affect electrical supply if Texas is forced to shut down about half its coal-fired power plants.

"The harm to Texas families will be immeasurable," Paxton said in a statement. Paxton was indicted Monday on three felony counts of securities fraud.

The power plant rule forms the cornerstone of Obama's plan to curb U.S. emissions and keep global temperatures from climbing.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott pledged to "lead the fight against an overreaching federal government that seems hell-bent on threatening the free-market principles this country was founded on."

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality spokeswoman Andrea Morrow says the agency that regulates the state's underground resources — including coal — will review the modified plan to determine "practical and legal aspects" to implementing the rule.

"Texas continues to have questions about the appropriateness, overall impact and usurpation of states' authority," Morrow said.

The electric distribution grid operator for most of Texas expects half the state's coal-fired power plants would shut down with Texas forced to develop more renewable energy sources.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas said in a November report that the federal power plan would challenge power reliability in Texas and raise consumer electricity costs.

"Consumers will be saddled with billions in increased power costs," said Stephen Minick, a Texas Association of Business spokesman.

However, the Sierra Club's Al Armendariz, formerly a regional EPA administrator, believes that only the biggest emitters will be idled and that the health benefits will be significant.

Armendariz calculates that the six dirtiest power plants in Texas — all of them coal — account for more than 30 percent of all the carbon emitted, about 83.8 million tons, in Texas' electricity sector.

"I suspect that what's going to happen is that a small number of power plants are going to be phased out and be replaced with renewable energy," Armendariz said.

The EPA is relying heavily on governors to help develop an emission-cutting strategy within three years but can create its own plan for states that refuse.

But it is unclear how the EPA would force Texas to comply with its new standards.

UConn Today (CT):

Clean Power Plan a Major Step Toward Lower Carbon Future

August 4, 2015 By: Joseph MacDougald, UConn Law

On Monday, President Barack Obama announced the Environmental Protection Agency's new Clean Power Plan, an ambitious set of regulations designed to cut the United States' carbon emissions while encouraging energy from renewable sources. UConn Today asked UConn Law professor Joseph MacDougald, the Strasser Fellow in Environmental Law and executive director of the Center for Energy & Environmental Law, to discuss the new plan.

Is the Clean Power Plan a big deal?

The Clean Power Plan is a huge deal! Carbon emissions and climate change are the most serious energy and environmental challenges of our age and this is the first aggressive, national policy that actually reduces greenhouse gas emissions from large power plants, the largest emitters of carbon dioxide. If followed, by 2030 the plan will reduce our emissions from these sources to two-thirds of the 2005 levels.

So, what is the Clean Power Plan?

The Clean Power Plan is a regulation, made by the Environmental Protection Agency, to set state-by-state standards for carbon emissions from existing power plants, ultimately reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as soot and other pollutants. While the final regulation runs 1,560 pages, in the big picture, it's pretty simple. The plan uses an existing part of the Clean Air Act to set a state's general emissions targets, yet the states themselves create the plans to reach that target. This type of approach is used throughout the environmental laws and is called cooperative federalism.

How will the states make their plans?

The EPA's announcement also includes guidelines to help each state craft their implementation plan. Aside from reductions, these guidelines also encourage increasing efficiency and expanding renewable power sources, like solar and wind. This flexible approach is important

because each state has a different power mix and will need different solutions.

Why is this happening now?

There are several possible reasons. One unsurprising answer from a law professor is “the law.” In 2007, the Supreme Court held in *Massachusetts v. EPA* that carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas, could be regulated under the Clean Air Act. Like knocking down the first domino in a long line, that ruling created the authority for the EPA to act; that authority triggered the EPA regulatory development process; and that process finally led to the Clean Power Plan. Another answer is presidential priority. President Obama has been giving a series of speeches highlighting his belief that climate policy needs immediate action, stating on Monday that we are the first generation to experience the effects of climate change and the last to be able to do something about it. A third reason is international. This fall, the United Nations will convene a major climate conference in Paris. These conferences are the venue for international climate agreements. It’s reasonable to suspect that federal officials believe this new regulation will give the United States leverage in negotiating with other countries.

Do you anticipate legal challenges?

Absolutely! Several states and coal companies already tried to sue the EPA over this very plan when it was announced just as a draft. Since a court generally won’t rule on draft proposals, only final agency decisions, the suit was dismissed. That all changes with the final rule announcement, and I wouldn’t be at all surprised to learn that a new lawsuit has already been filed.

Would you expect the Supreme Court to rule on the plan?

It’s too early to tell. The Supreme Court, unlike a regular trial court, does not hear every case it receives. It tends to hear those cases where other courts reach different conclusions in similar cases or where cases present important legal or national issues. However, the court has been active in hearing cases challenging EPA’s emissions rules, including two recent cases where the court struck down or limited EPA’s emissions programs in other areas. Given the court’s interest, I wouldn’t be surprised to find the plan in front of the court someday, depending on how any lower rulings develop.

What does this all mean for Connecticut?

All states will be affected, but since Connecticut receives almost half its electricity from nuclear

power, which does not generate carbon dioxide, and since we are already part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a multi-state partnership that has capped our carbon growth, Connecticut is probably better prepared than most states for this new plan.

Connecticut News Junkie (CT):

http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/archives/entry/connecticut_poised_to_benefit_from_clean_power_initiative

Connecticut Poised To Benefit from Clean Power Initiative

by Cara Rosner | Aug 4, 2015 5:30am

Connecticut officials are reviewing the sweeping Clean Power Plan announced Monday by President Barack Obama and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but are confident the state will fare well in the process and be rewarded for steps already taken to reduce carbon emissions here.

Two years in the making, the Clean Power Plan puts in place the first-ever EPA standards on carbon emissions for existing and new power plants in the United States. It also sets goals for states to cut carbon pollution — by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, nationwide.

Obama unveiled the plan Monday at the White House and said states will be incentivized for taking action sooner than later.

The president said the plan will help alleviate climate change, which has caused rising asthma rates among Americans and a growing number of extreme weather events, from storms to droughts.

“Climate change is not a problem for another generation,” Obama said. “Not anymore.”

The plan is the “biggest, most important step ever taken to combat climate change,” he said.

The EPA was required to issue the plan’s new rule under the Clean Air Act, and also because of a 2006 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Massachusetts et al v. Environmental Protection Agency*. In that case, Connecticut, 11 other states, and several cities sued the EPA to force the agency to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as pollutants.

Power plants are the largest contributors of carbon emissions, a key factor in climate change,

said Obama.

Obama said the EPA and White House have been working with states and power suppliers to ensure “they have the flexibility they need to cut this pollution, all while lowering energy bills, ensuring reliable service and paving the way for new job-creating innovations that will help America lead the world forward.”

The White House features a brief video and fact sheet about the plan on its website homepage. It also put out this release about what the plan means for Connecticut.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy praised the plan, saying in a statement: “This is about our future. The action we take now will endure for generations to come.”

Connecticut already has taken steps that have reduced carbon pollution by more than 10 percent from 1990 levels, Malloy said.

“And we’re continuing to move forward with an aggressive, ambitious goal to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent below 2001 levels by 2050,” he added. “We becoming a national leader on these issues because the steps we take today will build a better Connecticut tomorrow.”

The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is reviewing the plan and will develop a compliance plan, which will be required of all states, according to DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee.

“From all we know about the plan, we are confident we will receive credit for strong steps we have already taken to reduce emissions, and that we can comply with it in a manner that protects ratepayers and continues to build our economy for a sustainable and prosperous future,” Klee said in a statement.

Connecticut has made strides for several reasons, he said, including its participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which is a mini cap and trade program for nine states. As a result of that effort carbon emissions from power plants in Connecticut dropped 34 percent between 1990 and 2012, he said.

That effort also has generated \$137 million for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, and added jobs to the state, Klee said.

“Our state has also taken strong steps to reduce the demand from power for conventional fuels — another path the EPA rule suggests — by focusing on energy savings and deployment of renewable energy projects,” he said. “We have doubled funding for popular and cost-effective energy savings programs, and the lifetime energy savings achieved from projects funded in 2014 alone will avoid carbon emissions of more than 3.2 million tons.”

State Attorney General George Jepsen said his office also is reviewing the plan.

“The state of Connecticut has consistently demonstrated a commitment to clean air, reduced

emissions, and the development of alternative energy sources, and this plan will play an essential role in continued efforts to protect our environment and public health, safety and welfare,” Jepsen said in a statement.

Jepsen said his office will assist the EPA as the plan is implemented, including in any legal challenges that may arise.

“The new rules set reasonable limits on emissions of climate change pollution from new and existing power plants, and are firmly grounded in law,” he said.

Connecticut largely supports the initiative.

A poll by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication found that 78 percent of Connecticut residents support regulation of carbon emissions.

More than 85,000 comments from Connecticut residents were among the 8 million submitted from across the country in favor of the plan.

“The Clean Power Plan is the single biggest action the U.S. has ever taken on climate,” Environment Connecticut State Director Chris Phelps said. “Cracking down on coal and gas while ramping up wind, solar, and other clean energy sources will protect our families’ health today and ensure a safer climate for the future.”

CTNews.com:

<http://blog.ctnews.com/dixon/2015/08/03/gov-malloy-ag-jepsen-support-new-federal-clean-power-plan/>

Gov. Malloy, AG Jepsen, support new federal Clean Power Plan

Posted on August 3, 2015 | By Ken Dixon

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and Attorney General George Jepsen, joined by Robert Klee, commissioner of the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection issued a joint statement today in support of the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan to regulate carbon emissions from power plants.

“This is about our future,” Malloy said, complimenting President Barack Obama and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy – Connecticut’s former DEEP commissioner – for their commitment.

“In Connecticut, we have already implemented a forward-thinking vision, reducing carbon pollution by more than 10 percent from 1990 levels,” Malloy said. “The air we breathe is cleaner than it has been in decades as we build an advanced energy economy that delivers good-paying jobs. And we’re continuing to move forward with an aggressive, ambitious goal in to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent below 2001 levels by 2050.”

“The State of Connecticut has consistently demonstrated a commitment to clean air, reduced emissions and the development of alternative energy sources, and this plan will play an essential role in continued efforts to protect our environment and public health, safety, and welfare,” Jepsen said. “It is appropriate and critical that the EPA exercise its legal authority and satisfy its obligation to regulate. Such regulation will complement the contributions of the existing Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in promoting improved air quality and reducing health risks to our residents.”

Klee said the state’s progress has resulted from participation with eight other states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which “serves as a flexible, market-based solution other states should be able to replicate or adopt under the EPA rule to cut carbon emissions from power plants in a cost-effective way. As a result of the RGGI program, carbon emissions from power plants in Connecticut have declined 34 percent from 1990 to 2012, \$137 million has been generated for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, and new jobs have been added to our economy. “Our state has also taken strong steps to reduce the demand for power from conventional fuels – another path the EPA rule suggests – by focusing on energy efficiency and deployment of renewable energy projects.”

-

-

Stamford Advocate (CT)/Associated Press:

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/texas/article/Who-wins-and-loses-under-Obama-s-stricter-power-6421034.php>

Obama's power plant climate plan shifts to courts, states

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

Updated 10:58 am, Tuesday, August 4, 2015

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama sought to clamp down Monday on power plant emissions with a federal plan that — if successful — would attempt to slow global

warming by dramatically shifting the way Americans get and use electricity.

Touting the plan at a White House ceremony, Obama described his unprecedented carbon dioxide limits as the biggest step ever taken by the U.S. on climate change. On that point, at least, his opponents agreed. They denounced his proposal as egregious federal overreach that would send power prices surging, and vowed lawsuits and legislation to try to stop it.

"We're the first generation to feel the impact of climate change, and we're the last generation that can do something about it," Obama said. He added, "We only get one planet. There's no Plan B."

Obama's announcement sets off a years-long process for states to figure out how to comply.

Sixteen states — including energy-producing states like Kentucky, Wyoming and North Dakota — will face stricter emissions limits than they did under Obama's previous proposal. Montana's requirement more than doubled, from a 21 percent cut in the earlier plan to a 47 percent cut in the final version.

But other states like New Hampshire and Texas face more lenient cuts in the final plan. Three states got a pass from the Environmental Protection Agency and won't have to reduce emissions: Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii.

By the time the plan takes effect, Obama will be long out of office. Still, Obama was hoping that the plan would bolster his status as the first president to seriously tackle climate change, and galvanize other countries to take aggressive action to achieve a global climate treaty this year.

Under the plan, first proposed last year, the U.S. must cut overall power plant emissions 32 percent by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. The Obama administration said it would cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030, but argued that power bills would decrease because people would use less electricity and rely more heavily on low-cost sources like wind and solar. The energy industry has dismissed those estimates as overly rosy.

Here's what lies ahead for Obama's controversial plan:

LAWSUITS ABOUND

Threats of legal action started arriving within minutes of Obama unveiling his plan. In Texas, Kentucky, Kansas, Indiana and Wisconsin, to name a few, top officials said they would vigorously fight the rule, as did energy producers like Murray Energy Corp., a coal mining company.

In the coal-heavy state of West Virginia, state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey predicted that 20 to 25 states would join his suit against the government.

"Their legal foundation is very, very shaky," Morrisey said of the Obama administration.

Morrisey echoed other critics in arguing Obama has exceeded his authority by requiring

statewide steps like renewable energy use and reduced energy demand. He said under the Clean Air Act, the government can only require steps within a power plant.

In another hint of the likely legal strategy, Morrissey cited the Constitution's 10th Amendment, which protects the states against undue intrusion by Washington.

PASSING THE BATON

Another key threat could come from Obama's successor. Because of the lengthy timeline — states have 7 years to start complying — the next president will have ample time to unravel the rules if he or she chooses to do so. That means that a cornerstone of Obama's presidential legacy rests in someone else's hands.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination, has pledged to defend the rule if elected. But the Republican field is making the opposite pledge.

GOP candidates claimed Obama's actions are burdensome to business and block job creation. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker said the regulation was like a "buzz saw" to the U.S. economy, while former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said the plan "will throw countless people out of work and increases everyone's energy prices."

STATE OF AFFAIRS

Each state now has an individualized emissions reduction target to meet — in some cases higher than Obama's previous proposal, in some cases lower. States must submit implementation plans by 2018.

Starting in 2022, states will have to reduce emissions, but the cuts are phased in gradually until 2030, when states must meet their overall target. In 2020 and 2021, states that invest in renewable sources like wind and solar will earn credits that they can store away to offset pollution emitted later.

To meet their targets, states can use a variety of measures, including new technology to capture emissions, regional cap-and-trade schemes and energy efficiency programs.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has urged GOP governors not to comply, and many have agreed. McConnell also vowed Monday to use legislation to stop the plan, although Obama's veto power makes that option unlikely.

If a state refuses to submit a plan, the Environmental Protection Agency can impose one. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said the administration will immediately issue a model federal rule that states can use.

GEORGIA

Marietta Daily Journal (GA):

http://mdjonline.com/view/full_story/26786353/article-A--retirement-party--for-coal?instance=special%20_coverage_right_column

A ‘retirement party’ for coal

by Froma Harrop August 04, 2015 12:09 AM | 250 views | 0 0 comments | 1 1 recommendations
| email

Time to drop this “war on coal” talk. Time to ignore the hollering by coal country politicians over President Obama’s beefed-up plan to combat global warming.

No, the Clean Power Plan will not ruin their local economies, because coal has already done that, certainly in Appalachia. Look at those barren flats where majestic mountains once stood. The coal industry lopped off the mountaintops and fouled the streams, depriving West Virginia and eastern Kentucky of a key recruiting tool for modern employers prizing a healthy environment.

But let’s not go overly negative here. Coal did its job. It powered 20th-century America. The Appalachian coal regions gave and gave. We honor their sacrifice.

So, rather than call the new plan a war on coal, let us call it a retirement party for coal. Coal is the largest source of planet-warming gases. It must make room for 21st-century power.

Mother Nature has already offered us a foretaste of what she has in mind should global warming go unchecked. Higher temperatures have worsened drought in the West, igniting large swaths of California, Washington and Oregon.

Glacier National Park in northern Montana may sound like a cool, watery place. But tourists there have been abandoning their cars to flee wildfires. The glaciers themselves are melting and may be gone in 30 years.

Flooding in other parts of the country is part of the same climate phenomenon.

Natural gas emits about half as much carbon as does coal and can transition us to truly clean power. But the future is clearly renewable energy from such sources as the sun and wind.

The new rules push us in that direction. They will require utilities to generate at least 28 percent of their electric power from renewable sources by 2030. (Renewables accounted for only 13 percent last year.)

This is not mission impossible. In 2011, California mandated that 33 percent of its electricity come from renewable energy sources by 2020. California's economy is booming — aided no doubt by all that clean-energy venture capital (almost 60 percent of America's total) flowing into the state.

Obama's plan promotes a cap-and-trade system. States place a limit on greenhouse gases and let businesses buy and sell permits to emit them. This market-based approach started off as a conservative idea. Do remember that when the opposition rails against the idea as "cap and tax."

California already has a cap-and-trade system, and 10 other states have followed suit. At least 30 other states also have mandates for renewable energy.

Foes will no doubt bash the Clean Power Plan as radical, but the public should know that even these stricter regulations will not save us from global warming. They will only stop a free fall into planetary catastrophe.

What about other countries? A reasonable question. The plan will give Obama something serious to unfurl at the climate change summit this December in Paris. When the United States offers a plausible blueprint to meet the challenge, other countries, notably China, will be pressed to follow suit.

And what about the coal regions? Appalachia has considerable natural beauty left, a great location and plenty of water. Coal-producing Wyoming has its own attractions, some quite magnificent.

Coal is yesterday's fuel. Give it a respectful goodbye and dry the tears.

MAINE

Bangor Daily News (ME):

<http://bangordailynews.com/2015/08/03/politics/obamas-plan-to-slow-climate-change-earns-mixed-reviews-in-maine/>

Obama's plan to slow climate change earns mixed reviews in Maine

By Christopher Cousins, BDN Staff | Posted Aug. 03, 2015, at 7:07 p.m.

AUGUSTA, Maine — Reactions to President Barack Obama's ambitious and sweeping climate change announcement on Monday were hot and cold among environmentalists, energy experts and members of Maine's congressional delegation.

While some said that the package disproportionately benefits Maine and the other New England states where heating oil is the major source of energy, others said Obama's aggressive push toward renewable energy sources is too much, too soon.

In an announcement that some have called an attempt to enhance Obama's legacy as attention shifts to the race to succeed him, the Environmental Protection Agency on Monday released the final version of its Clean Power Plan, which proposes a more than 30 percent decrease in 2005 levels of carbon pollution from power plants by 2030.

"The United States is leading by example today, showing the world that climate action is an incredible economic opportunity to build a stronger foundation for growth," said EPA administrator Gina McCarthy in a news release.

The package calls on states to develop their own plans to institute emissions trading mechanisms that will help them achieve overall pollution reduction goals.

Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Senate Climate Action Task Force, said in a written statement that he was pleased states will be allowed to develop their own plans.

"I am encouraged that it sets concrete clean air goals and empowers states to tailor their own paths to achieve emissions reductions benchmarks rather than simply handing down a set of Washington-devised blanket regulations that will only make it more difficult to meet the distinct needs of individual states," said King.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she was pleased that Obama's plan was less stringent than originally proposed, particularly for states such as Maine that have already made progress on reducing air pollution. Maine is one of several northeastern and mid-Atlantic states that are part of a carbon-trading program called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and Maine also has made strides with energy efficiency programs.

"The EPA's original proposal would have unfairly disadvantaged and asked more of states that took action early than it would have from states that had not yet acted to reduce their emissions," said Collins in a written statement. "The regulations released today represent a considerable

improvement in this regard.”

Collins and King both said they will monitor implementation of the program to ensure that biomass — which means wood products — continues to be an acceptable source of energy for states such as Maine to use to reach renewable energy goals.

Maine 2nd District U.S. Rep. Bruce Poliquin, a Republican, criticized the plan as a government overreach.

“While I appreciate concerns about our state’s great outdoors, I’m worried that the proposal the president has put forward is far too overreaching and harmful to Maine’s hardworking businesses and employees,” said Poliquin in a written statement. “Overregulation and poor government policies have led to higher energy prices for families in Maine and increased risk to our national security.”

Rep. Chellie Pingree, a Democrat who represents Maine’s 1st District, was enthusiastic about Obama’s proposal and said it would help curb effects of global warming that are already evident in extreme weather events and ocean acidification.

“With sources like offshore wind and tidal power already being developed in Maine, it would be a huge opportunity for the state’s economy and workforce,” she said in a written statement.

Tony Buxton, an energy lobbyist for Preti Flaherty, said Obama’s proposal is great news for New England, which he said consumes more than 80 percent of the nation’s heating oil.

“It will save money and lower emissions on the electricity generation side and will also help us get off oil for home heating,” said Buxton, who has long been a proponent of renewable energy. “What the president is asking us to do is something that is completely in our interest.”

Todd Griscti, a partner at Preti Flaherty, said Obama’s plan could face problems if states opt out of it, even though the EPA would then impose federal rules on states in that event. He said some congressional Republicans have urged states to ignore the Clean Power Plan.

“States are in a difficult dynamic when they’re getting different signals,” he said.

Adrienne Bennett, a spokeswoman for Republican Gov. Paul LePage, declined to comment on the issue until LePage has had a chance to review the program in detail.

Dylan Voorhees, clean energy director for the Natural Resources Council of Maine, called the plan “great news.”

“It will ensure that other states join us and do their part to address climate change before it takes too great a toll on our economy, our health and our way of life,” he said. “Maine has taken bold, effective action; these national limits on carbon pollution are way overdue.”

Foster's Daily Democrat Online/Associated Press Maine:

<http://www.fosters.com/article/20150803/AP01/308039979/-1/FOSOPINION0103>

Maine environmental groups praise federal power plant rules

Posted Aug. 3, 2015 at 4:45 PM

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Environmental advocates in Maine are praising President Barack Obama's plan to dramatically cut emissions from U.S. power plants even though the state's power plants likely won't see many big changes under the new rules.

Under new regulations that the president announced on Monday, states must cut carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030. Maine is will be required to reduce its emission rate by 11 percent, compared to 2012 levels.

Dylan Voorhees, clean energy director for the Natural Resources Council of Maine, called Obama's plan the single most important action that has been taken to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change.

Maine is expected to comply as part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a group of northeastern states that's already on track to reach its pollution targets.

-

Foster's Daily Democrat Online:

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20150804/NEWS/150809741/-1/NEWS01>

Support the Climate Action Plan

Posted Aug. 4, 2015 at 2:00 AM

Aug. 3 – To the Editor:

With the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Clean Power Plan announced this week, another key piece of administration's Climate Action Plan is ready to be put in place. The Clean Power Plan sets the first ever federal limits on carbon pollution from existing power plants.

More than a dozen American companies, including Apple, General Motors, and Goldman Sachs, have pledged to invest more than \$140 billion in reducing carbon pollution in advance of the United Nations conference on climate change in Paris later this year. According to the White House, by signing the American Business Act on Climate Pledge, these companies are concretely supporting the Obama administration's efforts for a strong international agreement to address climate change.

While the White House joins forces with the business and international communities to take decisive action, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his climate-denying allies in Congress are finding themselves more isolated than ever before.

I support the EPA Clean Power Plan and expect my senators, Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte, to support the Clean Power Plan as well.

Walter King

Dover

MASSACHUSETTS

WWLP.com 22 News (MA):

<http://wwlp.com/2015/08/03/massachusetts-air-quality-required-to-improve/>

Massachusetts air quality required to improve

By Alessandra Martinez

Published: August 3, 2015, 11:10 pm Updated: August 3, 2015, 11:51 pm

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) – The Obama administration wants to clear the air for kids. The Obama administration’s “Clean Power Plan” is a key part of the President’s Climate Action Plan to cut carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants.

Under the plan, the Environmental Protection Agency will set standards for the entire country for the first time ever. States will have to meet specific carbon emission reduction standards based on individual energy consumption. President Obama wants to take action now to cut carbon pollution and protect children’s health.

22News spoke with one doctor here at Baystate Medical Center who said that particles in the atmosphere that come from chemical reactions or greenhouse gases can cause serious health complications – such as lung disease or asthma – especially for children.

“This new legislation will save lives,” says pediatrician Matthew Sadof of Baystate Medical Center. “The type of air pollution associated with power plants is associated with poor lung growth and poor lung function in children.”

The Mount Tom Coal plant in Holyoke shut down last year. An effort to locate a bio-mass power plant in Springfield is in the courts.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 11% of Massachusetts adults have asthma. Asthma rates have doubled over the last 30 years.

Steve Makos from Chicopee told 22News, “I don’t think there’s ever too late of a time to look at alternatives. Resources like water, whatever they think could be the safest.”

According the President’s announcement, Massachusetts power plants emitted 15 million metric tons of carbon pollution in 2013; equal to the yearly pollution of more than 3 million cars.

The Sun Chronicle/Associated Press (MA):

http://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/state/massachusetts-officials-praise-move-by-obama-on-power-plants/article_ac7de591-2766-5d77-9842-1c372d3c8eb6.html

Massachusetts officials praise move by Obama on power plants

Posted: Monday, August 3, 2015 5:03 pm | Updated: 5:30 pm, Mon Aug 3, 2015.

BOSTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's decision to mandate steeper greenhouse gas cuts from power plants may be running into opposition in some states, but in Massachusetts fellow Democrats are hailing the move.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey on Monday joined other state attorneys general and local governments pledging to defend the new rules in court.

Sen. Edward Markey called the plan ambitious and achievable, saying it could help avoid the worse consequences of climate change. Rep. Niki Tsongas also said the mandate could protect future generations.

Environmental activists like the Sierra Club, the Conservation Law Foundation, and Environment Massachusetts also praised the plan, calling it good for business and the environment and saying it will help encourage solar and wind energy.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, vowed to use legislation to block the plan.

Telegram & Gazette Online (MA):

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20150804/OPINION/150809792/>

Green building jobs can help grow regional economy

By Grey Lee

Posted Aug. 4, 2015 at 6:00 AM

Buildings are at the heart of what makes a city unique. Throughout history, trends in architecture have become the key identifiers of the values held to be important by the generations that preceded ours. The structures built throughout the course of our generation will carry with them the message of the importance of energy efficiency and sustainability. Green technology is no longer the new frontier of building strategy; it is poised to become the mainstream.

In a city like Worcester, an up-and-coming hub for innovation in technology and business ventures, environmentally conscious building practices are not only viewed as forward-thinking – they're economical. Research indicates that while green building does not cost significantly more than traditional construction, it enables building owners and managers to optimize systems

for high-level efficiency at bottom-line costs. The value of green building has seen significant growth in the last 10 years alone, from roughly \$10 billion nationally in 2005 to an estimated \$260+ billion by the end of 2013. By 2016, at least 55% of commercial and institutional construction will be green certified, energy conscious and environmentally friendly.

As a result of this rise in green building, the demand for workers with an understanding of environmentally friendly and sustainable building practices has increased dramatically. According to a recent McGraw-Hill construction study, 35% of architects, engineers, and contractors reported having green building industry jobs today. Projections estimated that the combination of government acceleration of green initiatives and public pressure for more energy efficient design translated to the creation of eight million additional jobs between 2012 and 2014. Job training programs that prepare young people to gain professional credentials for green building ratings systems such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), which is popular in more than 150 countries and territories, can help train tomorrow's work force with internationally transferable skills in a high paying, high demand industry that is projected to continue growing at an exponential pace.

To match the expanding job market in green enterprises, a growing number of technical high schools are introducing environmental building programs to arm students with the necessary skills for sustainable careers. Worcester County is home to some of the strongest career training high schools in the state, and that now extends to sustainability.

Worcester Technical High School, a leader in academic and technical training in the Worcester public schools system, highlights clean energy education through its Coughlin Construction Technology Academy. The mission of the Academy is to educate and prepare students to meet the challenges of current global society – environmental issues being one of the most significant. It is Worcester Tech's commitment to implementing cutting edge vocational programs, such as its green heating, ventilating, and air conditioning management degree (HVAC-R), which has made it a model for secondary education on a national scale. Upon visiting the school in 2014, Present Obama said, "I want the nation to learn from Worcester Tech."

Similarly, Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School prides itself on its focus on integrating health and environmental concepts into the general curriculum and school culture. Green technology and sustainability are woven into all 17 of the school's vocational technical shops. Under teacher supervision, students get first-hand experience maintaining the high-efficiency heating and cooling systems throughout the facility, as well as the schools water-conserving plumbing system. Students even travel to public buildings in the surrounding community to envision sustainable redesigns for them. After securing a Clean Energy Workforce Development Grant from the Commonwealth Corporation, BVT developed a regional renewable energy training center to offer workforce training in solar and other emerging renewal energy technologies at a greater capacity.

Schools like BVT and Worcester Tech are empowering young people through these career-driven programs, giving them a chance to compete in the new sustainability job market, and ultimately, the growing sustainability-oriented global economy. Both schools should continue developing on these programs by offering specific courses aimed at helping students achieve

credentials in green building and sustainable design. These credentials are relatively inexpensive and they help students enter the workforce with the experience needed to be successful in our rapidly evolving green economy. With these talented workers, we can forge a new era of sustainable design that will leave a permanent mark on the architecture of our cities and showcase our values for future generations.

Boston.com (MA):

http://finance.boston.com/boston/news/read/30384724/clean_power_plan_means_reduced_coal_emissions

Clean Power Plan Means Reduced Coal Emissions, Safer Utility Business Model

By: As You Sow via PR Newswire August 03, 2015 at 19:57 PM EDT

OAKLAND, Calif., Aug. 3, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released the Clean Power Plan, a landmark regulation that will benefit consumers, businesses, and the environment alike. The Clean Power Plan has the potential to revolutionize the electric power sector by speeding the transition from coal to renewable power – a move that would make utilities a safer investment. In his remarks, President Obama described the Clean Power Plan as "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

The Clean Power Plan will allow states flexibility in the methods used to reduce air pollution, while creating standards that will lower overall pollution levels. The plan requires states to cut carbon pollution by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030, using their preferred combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and pollution reduction technologies. These building blocks are critical to displacing coal-based power, which has a long history of causing health and environmental devastation, yet remains a significant portion of many utilities' power mix.

"The Clean Power Plan is long overdue. Cleaner, safer, energy solutions are emerging and utilities that adopt these low-cost clean energy solutions – rather than fighting to delay them – are likely to be the most profitable," said Amelia Timbers, Energy Program Manager at As You Sow. "By discouraging coal, the plan lowers risk for utility investors, and improves the power sector's long term prospects."

Coal use is also fraught with financial risk, a fact that markets have been aware of for years. In

2011, As You Sow published The Financial Risks of Investments in Coal, a key report that predicted the imminent collapse of the coal market. Similar risks face the utility industry as the environmental, public health, and regulatory risks of coal add up to potentially large future liabilities – financial risks that have not been adequately or transparently communicated to investors. By requiring that states reduce carbon pollution, the Clean Power Plan will help to protect investors from both the environmental and the financial risks of coal.

As You Sow has been pushing utilities to reduce coal use, adopt renewable energy, and improve climate performance for years. In 2015, over \$10 billion in shares voted in favor of shareholder resolutions put forward by As You Sow and other co-investors.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NHPR New Hampshire Public Radio (NH):

<http://nhpr.org/post/final-version-obamas-carbon-rules-cut-nh-some-slack>

Final Version of Obama's Carbon Rules Cut N.H. Some Slack

By SAM EVANS-BROWN • 5 HOURS AGO: Aug 4, 2015

The final version of the Obama administration's regulations on carbon emissions from power plants, which were released Monday, set a substantially softer goal for New Hampshire. State officials are confident they can achieve the reductions.

While nation-wide the so-called Clean Power Plan calls for a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, in New Hampshire is slightly less than 15 percent.

That's quite a reversal from the draft rules released last year. "If you recall, in the original proposal, New Hampshire was the 5th most stringent in the country," says Mike Fitzgerald from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

But the EPA rejiggered that math, and is now giving states more flexibility in how to achieve their cuts. That said, Fitzgerald says New Hampshire's easiest path to compliance still likely lies

in remaining part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, a nine state carbon cap and trade program which began in 2009.

The Telegraph (NH):

<http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/news/statenewengland/1068633-469/nh-well-positioned-to-meet-clean-power.html>

NH well positioned to meet Clean Power Plan standards

By DAVID BROOKS Staff Writer | Tuesday 8/4/15

The Clean Power Plan proposed Monday by President Obama may be a huge change for the nation's energy producers, but its limits on carbon pollution seem unlikely to spur major changes in New Hampshire because our power plants have been changing for years.

"We are confident that New Hampshire is already well positioned to meet the standards laid out by the Clean Power Plan through the state's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which the plan upholds as an example for other states to follow," said Martin Murray, spokesman for Eversource Energy, which as the state's largest electricity provider is not generally a fan of pollution mandates from the government.

[Subscribe/Log In to Read Full Article]

Concord Monitor (NH):

<http://www.concordmonitor.com/home/18037824-95/nh-officials-hopeful-that-clean-power-plan-will-curb-wind-borne-pollutants-in-state>

N.H. officials hopeful that Clean Power Plan will curb wind-borne pollutants in state

By ALLIE MORRIS

Monitor staff

Monday, August 3, 2015

(Published in print: Tuesday, August 4, 2015)

New Hampshire officials are hopeful that a set of carbon emission reductions laid out by the Environmental Protection Agency on Monday will help curb other harmful pollutants that travel across state lines from power plants downwind.

The EPA on Monday released its final Clean Power Plan rule that calls for a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions nationwide by 2030, from 2005 levels. It's a more stringent goal than the 30 percent cut the agency originally proposed.

State officials are still reviewing the rule, but say that a nationwide reduction in carbon emissions would benefit the Granite State.

"The continued greening of our electric grid nationally benefits New Hampshire as a downwind state," said Craig Wright of the state Department of Environmental Services. "New England is the tailpipe of the country, literally."

Reducing carbon emission often has a co-benefit of lowering other pollutants – including mercury – released by fossil fuel-burning plants. Pollutants emitted in other states can be carried upwind and negatively affect the air quality in another.

"When you reduce the carbon, you are reducing those (other pollutants) as well," said Mike Fitzgerald of DES. "That's an additional benefit."

New Hampshire's finalized carbon emission target is a much smaller reduction than the EPA originally proposed in a draft rule released last year. The EPA sets the state-specific 2030 reduction goal at 858 pounds of CO2 emissions per megawatt-hour of electricity generation, which is nearly double the 486-pound goal the EPA originally proposed. It is still a reduction from the state's 2012 emission rate of 905 pounds per megawatt-hour.

New Hampshire officials have been hopeful that the state's participation in a regional cap-and-trade program will help satisfy the regulations.

Since 2009, New Hampshire has participated in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that

requires fossil fuel-burning power plants to purchase an allowance for each ton of carbon dioxide they emit. Earnings from the auctions are invested in energy efficiency programs. Currently, the overall RGGI cap on emissions is set at 88.7 million tons. But that number decreases by 2.5 percent each year until 2020.

New Hampshire is home to five fossil fuel-burning power plants. Eversource Energy owns and operates two coal-fired plants – Merrimack Station in Bow and Schiller Station on the Seacoast. Newington Station, EP Newington and Granite Ridge Londonderry are the three plants in the state that primarily burn natural gas.

Gov. Maggie Hassan said in a statement she is “encouraged that the Clean Power Plan appears to hold other states to the higher standards that the Granite State and other Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states have successfully implemented while maintaining reliability and helping to spur clean energy innovation and investments.”

NEW YORK

Associated Press (NY):

[No link available]

EPA smokestack rules unwelcome, unneeded say leaders in NC

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) - Stricter carbon dioxide limits on power plants issued Monday have lawmakers in North Carolina, a state that started cutting smokestack pollution more than a decade ago, gearing up to fight the Obama administration over balancing pollution versus cost. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the carbon dioxide limits for North Carolina are moderate compared with other states.

In part that's because the nation's largest electric company has been forced to change after a 2002 state law made utilities clean up power plant smokestack emissions beyond what federal rules required. Duke Energy has been phasing out its dirtiest coal-burning plants as cheaper natural gas fuel has become plentiful. The company said it has shuttered 40 older coal units in the Carolinas and the Midwest since 2011 and spent more than \$9 billion for newer coal and natural gas facilities.

Environmentalists said the EPA rules unveiled Monday build on North Carolina's 2002 Clean Smokestacks Act, which required the state's 14 coal-fired power plants to reduce nitrogen oxide,

sulfur dioxide and other emissions. The EPA last year declared North Carolina met the tougher national air quality standard for fine-particle pollution adopted in 2012. Mercury emissions from the state's power plants also fell by 70 percent in the subsequent decade.

The state Legislature in 2002 was controlled by Democrats, who allowed utilities to recoup costs for cleanup equipment from consumers. Republicans won governing majorities in the 2010 elections.

On Tuesday, the state Senate is scheduled to vote on legislation that would prohibit state agencies from implementing the EPA clean power plan until court challenges are resolved or next July, whichever is later.

Spokesmen for Republican Gov. Pat McCrory did not say whether he supports or opposes resisting the EPA rule. Last September, McCrory signed a letter with more than a dozen other Republican governors opposing the proposed EPA restrictions.

The EPA regulations threaten to increase North Carolina power bills and job creation while doing little to improve the state's air quality, McCrory said in a statement Monday.

The rules also "have the potential to jeopardize the success we've made in making North Carolina's air the cleanest it's been since we began tracking air quality back in the 1970s," he said.

McCrory formerly worked for Charlotte-based Duke Energy Corp., the country's largest electric company with more than 7 million customers in the Carolinas, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Florida. The company said Monday that it has cut sulfur dioxide emissions by nearly 90 percent since 2005, nitrogen oxides by 65 percent and carbon dioxide by 22 percent.

"As we continue to move to a lower carbon future, we will also continue to work constructively with states to identify customer solutions that preserve the reliability and affordability that our communities expect," Duke Energy Chief Executive Officer Lynn Good said in a statement.

Republican state lawmakers are also considering freezing a 2007 law that required electric utilities to generate 6 percent of their power from renewable resources this year, increasing to 12.5 percent by 2020. Corporations including Apple Inc., Google Inc. and VF Corp. said the change would upset their energy planning and the renewable-energy industry says nearly 23,000 workers are employed in the industry.

-

Associated Press (NY):

[No link available]

Wash. governor praises Obama's plan to cut emissions

SEATTLE (AP) - Governor Jay Inslee has praised President Barack Obama's plan to limit greenhouses gas emissions from U.S. power plants.

The Democratic governor says Washington state is already experiencing costly climate impacts and urgent action is needed.

Obama's plan released Monday sets a 2030 goal to reduce emissions by 37 percent, compared to 2012 levels. That's less stringent than a previous proposal.

Inslee said in his statement Monday that Washington state will go further. He recently directed the state Department of Ecology to develop a plan to cap carbon emissions in the state and to increase enforcement of existing pollution laws.

A spokeswoman for the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission says they're currently reviewing the rules. But she says based on what they've seen so far, the state is "well placed to meet the final target."

New York Times (NY):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/04/opinion/obama-takes-a-crucial-step-on-climate-change.html?src=twr>

Obama Takes a Crucial Step on Climate Change

By RICHARD L. REVESZ and JACK LIENKEAUG. 3, 2015

President Obama's Clean Power Plan has rightly been hailed as the most important action any president has taken to address the climate crisis.

The new rule requires the nation's power plants to cut their carbon dioxide emissions to 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

Power plants are the largest source of such pollution in the United States, responsible for more than a third of the country's carbon dioxide emissions. This greenhouse gas is the main driver of climate change, yet, until today, most plants could emit the pollutant in unlimited quantities.

The president's plan is important not only because of the reductions it will achieve in domestic emissions. It also signals to the international community that America is serious about reining in

its contribution to the global problem of greenhouse gas pollution. This message is particularly salient as the world's nations prepare to gather in Paris in December to negotiate a new climate agreement.

Of course, not everyone is happy with the new rule. Some, like the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, a Republican from coal-producing Kentucky, have denounced it as the latest — and most damaging — attack in President Obama's "war on coal."

There's no getting around the fact that a large number of coal-fired power plants are likely to close their doors in the near future. The Clean Power Plan will be at least partially responsible for many of these closings. A recent study by the United States Energy Information Administration estimated that almost 90 gigawatts of coal-fired electric generating capacity (close to 10 percent of the nation's total) will be retired by 2020, and that just over half of that loss will be caused by the new regulation.

But the truth is that most of the coal plants at risk should have been shuttered years ago. Traditionally, the economically useful life of a coal-fired plant was thought to be about 30 years. As of 2014, coal-fired plants in the United States had been operating for an average of 42 years, and many plants had been in service far longer. Some date all the way back to the 1950s, meaning they have already been running for twice their expected life span.

Unsurprisingly, these clunkers tend to pollute at a far higher rate than more modern plants. Since 1990, a vast majority of the new electric generation capacity in the United States has been built to burn natural gas. Gas plants emit, on average, half the carbon dioxide, a third of the nitrogen oxides and a hundredth of the sulfur oxides per megawatt hour that coal plants do. The second largest source of new capacity has been wind power, which creates no air pollution at all.

Given the ready availability of newer, cleaner technology, why are we still getting our electricity from plants built in the Eisenhower era? The blame, ironically enough, rests with our nation's most important environmental law.

Nearly 45 years ago, an almost unanimous Congress passed the Clean Air Act, which had the remarkably ambitious goal of eliminating essentially all air pollution that posed a threat to the public.

But however lofty its goals, the law contained a terrible flaw: Existing industrial facilities — most notably, electric power plants — were largely exempt from direct federal regulation. For some of the most ubiquitous pollutants, like those that form soot and smog, only newly constructed facilities would face limits on their emissions.

This "grandfathering" of old power plants didn't seem terribly consequential at the time. Soon enough, it was thought, those plants would run out their useful lives and close down, making way for new facilities that would be subject to federal standards.

But that expectation turned out to be wrong. By instituting different regulatory regimes for new and existing plants, Congress had significantly altered the math behind decisions to retire plants.

A system that subjected new plants to strict emissions controls but allowed old plants to pollute with impunity gave those old plants an enormous comparative economic advantage and an incentive for their owners to keep operating them much longer than they would have otherwise.

By the late 1980s, it was clear that the central goals of the Clean Air Act would never be achieved if these grandfathered coal plants were not regulated more stringently. Every president since then, whether a Democrat or Republican, has taken meaningful steps to slash pollution from existing plants, in most cases relying not on new legislation but on previously neglected provisions of the Clean Air Act itself. The statute has, in this sense, held the keys to its own salvation.

The Clean Power Plan follows in this bipartisan tradition. No new legislation is necessary. If the plan appears likely to spur a larger number of plant retirements than its predecessors, that is mainly because it is taking effect during a period when natural gas is affordable and abundant as never before. In the current market, shuttering old coal plants and ramping up the use of gas plants is simply many utilities' most cost-effective option for cutting their carbon emissions.

Those who promote the "war on coal" narrative would have us believe that the president's plan represents some sort of personal vendetta, an attempt, as Senator McConnell put it, to "crush forms of energy" the president and his allies don't like. In reality, the rule is the latest chapter in a decades-long effort to clean up our oldest, dirtiest power plants and at last fulfill the pledge that Congress made to the American people back in 1970: that the air we all breathe will be safe.

It's a promise worth keeping.

New York Times (NY):

[No link available]

Obama's Flexible Fix

For many years, I used to spend at least part of the summer in the gorgeous Laurentides region of Quebec, an hour northwest of Montreal. By the mid-1980s, with each return trip, I could see a growing environmental threat to the area's beauty: More and more trees were dying. When I asked people what was happening, the answer was simple: "pluie acide," or acid rain, a form of pollution caused by sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides that were spewing from coal-fired power plants in America.

A decade or so later, the trees had stopped dying. An environmental disaster had been averted. What had happened?

The answer was that the administration of the first President George Bush, working hand in glove with the Environmental Defense Fund, devised a market-based plan, now known as cap-and-trade, to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions. Congress passed it in 1990. The brilliance of the scheme is that while it set emissions targets, it did not tell power companies how to meet those targets, allowing them a great deal of flexibility. It also provided a financial incentive: Companies that cut their pollution beyond their caps could trade their leftover emission allowances to companies that were having trouble staying under the limit.

Industry officials and many state officials complained bitterly about the new system, saying it would be costly and tie companies up in regulatory knots. But that's not what happened. "Industry had incentive to innovate," recalls Fred Krupp, the president of the Environmental Defense Fund. As an interim measure, power companies began using low-sulfur coal while they worked to come up with better and more affordable scrubbers. Today, average levels of sulfur dioxide pollution are 76 percent lower than they were in 1990. The cost has been far less than the critics feared.

On Monday afternoon, President Obama unveiled his Clean Power Plan, formalizing some tough new rules from the Environmental Protection Agency that are aimed at reducing the carbon emitted by power companies. There is no bigger source of carbon pollution; the goal is that by 2030, carbon emissions will be reduced by 32 percent from their 2005 level. In the fight against climate change, nothing is more important.

Once again, opponents are up in arms, forecasting calamity for the utility industry if the rules are allowed to stand, with at least a dozen states planning to sue the E.P.A. The attorney general of West Virginia, Patrick Morrisey, has said the regulations would lead to "reduced jobs, higher electricity rates" and increased stress on the power grid. Mississippi's Republican governor, Phil Bryant, described the E.P.A. plan as "burdensome."

And then there's Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, whose state, Kentucky, is in the heart of coal country. He has openly called on states to defy the E.P.A. On Monday, he described the new rules as "a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion."

But just as with the acid rain controversy, the opponents of the new emission-reduction rules have it exactly backward. The E.P.A. rules have a far greater chance of creating jobs, being less burdensome and epitomizing sound public policy than the opposite.

The single most important fact about the new regulations is that they don't tell utilities how to get their emissions down. Instead, they allow the states flexibility to figure out how to lower their own emissions. Some may choose a cap-and-trade system -- as California and nine states in the Northeast have already done to great effect. (In California, for instance, carbon intensity -- the amount of carbon pollution per million dollars of gross domestic product -- is down 23 percent from 2001, while its G.D.P. has grown.) They can stress energy efficiency or renewable energy. They can offer incentives to push innovations that would make carbon capture more affordable,

which would allow for the continued use of coal, still America's most plentiful energy source. Or they can do all of the above. Since many of these things are already happening, the new government policy is really just giving industry an extra shove in the right direction.

Jim Rogers, the former chief executive of Duke Energy, told me that he thinks natural gas could serve as the same kind of bridge to emission-lowering technology that low-sulfur coal was in the acid rain days. The point is, there is really no reason the Clean Power Plan won't work -- except for political intransigence, which is far worse today than it was during the first Bush administration.

In his 2010 book, "The Climate War," Eric Pooley, the former managing editor of Fortune who has since become the Environmental Defense Fund's communication chief, notes that the whole time officials at the fund were working on cap-and-trade to solve the acid rain problem, climate change was never far from their thoughts. They wanted to prove, with sulfur dioxide emissions, that a flexible, market-based system worked -- and would work for carbon emissions as well.

It did. And it will.

New York Times (NY):

[No link available]

Move to Fight Climate Plan Started Early

WASHINGTON -- In the early months of 2014, a group of about 30 corporate lawyers, coal lobbyists and Republican political strategists began meeting regularly in the headquarters of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, often, according to some of the participants, in a conference room overlooking the White House. Their task was to start devising a legal strategy for dismantling the climate change regulations they feared were coming from President Obama.

The group -- headed in part by Roger R. Martella Jr., a top environmental official in the George W. Bush administration, and Peter Glazer, a prominent Washington lobbyist -- was getting an early start.

By the time Mr. Obama announced the regulations at the White House on Monday, the small group that had begun its work at the Chamber of Commerce had expanded into a vast network of lawyers and lobbyists ranging from state capitols to Capitol Hill, aided by Republican governors and congressional leaders. And their plan was to challenge Mr. Obama at every opportunity and take the fight against what, if enacted, would be one of his signature accomplishments to the Supreme Court.

Within minutes of the announcement, West Virginia's attorney general, Patrick Morrisey, stepped before a bank of cameras for a news conference at the Greenbrier resort in his home state. Flanked by Mike Duncan, the president of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, one of the nation's top coal lobbying groups, and Greg Zoeller, the attorney general of Indiana, Mr. Morrisey announced that a group of at least 15 Republican state attorneys general were preparing to jointly file a legal challenge to Mr.

Obama's proposal.

"The final rule announced Monday blatantly disregards the rule of law and will severely harm West Virginia and the U.S. economy," Mr. Morrissey said. "This rule represents the most far-reaching energy regulation in this nation's history, drawn up by radical bureaucrats and based on an obscure, rarely used provision of the Clean Air Act."

"Our coalition, in short order, will comprise of many states, consumers, mine workers, coal operators, utilities and businesses who are united in opposition to this radical and illegal policy," he added.

While Mr. Obama had not even put forth a draft proposal of his plans when the group started its work, the president had made plain in several speeches that he intended to act forcefully on climate change -- and that he would flex the muscle of his executive authority to do so. "If Congress won't act soon to protect future generations, I will," he said in his 2013 State of the Union address. The lawyers and lobbyists wanted to be ready to fire back hard and fast when he did.

In devising its strategy, the group worked closely with the office of Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader whose coal-producing home state also stands to suffer under the regulation. While Mr. McConnell opposes the climate change regulations, his advisers knew that he had little chance of enacting legislation to block them in Congress. Instead, Mr. McConnell has taken the unusual step of reaching out directly to governors and attorneys general, urging them to refuse to submit compliance plans for the regulations, and encouraging a state-by-state rejection of the rules.

Mr. Morrissey, whose coal-producing home state is also struggling with the nation's highest unemployment rate, was chosen as the public face of the suit. But key strategists joining the original planning were Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas, a former attorney general there, and Scott Pruitt, the attorney general of Oklahoma. Both already had experience suing the Obama administration over major Clean Air Act regulations.

An important ally in the effort was the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, a conservative advocacy group that pushes policy through state legislatures. Typically, the council's committees of corporate members will craft a model bill designed to push through policies it supports, such as rolling back environmental regulations.

At a July meeting in San Diego, ALEC's energy committee -- which includes Mr. Duncan, the coal lobbyist who also worked closely with Mr. McConnell on his tactics -- enacted a model bill designed to directly support state attorneys general who legally challenge the climate change plan. According to a person present at that July meeting, the bill would allow states to create funds, which could be funded by corporate donations, to support legal challenges to the climate change rules.

While it is not unusual for major corporations to sue the federal government over environmental regulations, people involved in the effort to craft a legal strategy against the climate change rules said the time, labor and coordination of the effort were unusual. That effort reflects the sweeping scope of climate change regulations, which, unless struck down in the Supreme Court, could transform huge sectors of the economy, potentially crippling the coal industry and other industrial sectors whose economic well-being relies on coal.

The Obama administration contends that despite the massive scale of the challenges trained against it, the climate change plan is legally sound. "The final rule is built on a rock-solid legal foundation," said Thomas Reynolds, a spokesman for the agency.

"E.P.A. is using its clear authority under the Clean Air Act to set emission standards for air pollutants," he said. "The rule is wholly consistent with the law, and we are confident it will withstand any and all legal challenges."

But Michael McKenna, a Republican energy lobbyist who has worked closely with the group, says that the attorneys general will not back down. "This rule was more aggressive than any of us could have imagined," he said. "There is no lack of state attorneys general who would like to put a bullet in this thing." The rules, a final, stricter version of a plan that the Environmental Protection Agency announced in 2012 and 2014, assigns each state a target for reducing its carbon pollution from power plants. States will be allowed to create their own plans to meet the requirements and will have to submit initial versions of their plans by 2016 and final versions by 2018.

The most aggressive of the regulations requires that by 2030, the nation's existing power plants must cut emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels, which is an increase from the 30 percent target proposed in the draft regulation.

The president on Monday called the new rules a public health imperative and "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change." He also sought to wrap the policy

in the legitimacy of transcendental values, noting that Pope Francis issued an encyclical in June, calling action on the issue a "moral obligation."

Even as Mr. Obama acknowledged the steep resistance from coal-producing states and industry critics, he said it was up to the United States to adopt tough standards so that other countries like China would feel compelled to take similar steps.

Even before Mr. Obama began speaking Monday, Mr. McConnell said he would do everything in his power to combat the rules, which he said the president had crafted because he was "tired of having to work with the Congress the people elected."

"That's why the administration is now trying to impose these deeply regressive regulations -- regulations that may be illegal, that won't meaningfully impact the global environment, and that are likely to harm middle- and lower-class Americans most -- by executive fiat," Mr. McConnell said. "It represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion," he added.

New York Times (NY):

[No link available]

Alpha Natural Resources, a Major Coal Producer, Files for Bankruptcy Protection

Alpha Natural Resources, once a powerhouse of the American coal industry, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Monday so it may emerge from the grip of a \$3 billion debt at a time when utilities are switching to natural gas and coal prices are plummeting.

Alpha Natural Resources borrowed heavily in 2011 to buy Massey Energy for \$7.1 billion, seeking, like many coal companies at the time, to acquire an empire of Appalachian coal mines in the hope that China would be a growth market for exports.

That deal turned out to be a disaster for the company when demand for both steelmaking and power-generating coal declined domestically and in several important international markets in recent years.

"The change and challenges the U.S. coal industry has experienced over the last several years are greater than any in the past three decades," Kevin S. Crutchfield, Alpha's chairman and chief executive, said in a statement released by the company.

"There is no doubt more uncertainty ahead, but also transformational opportunity in the coal sector for those who make proactive, strategic decisions," Mr. Crutchfield said.

The coal industry suffers from multiple problems. Natural gas prices have swooned in recent years, leading many utilities to switch from coal. The Obama administration on Monday unveiled a set of Environmental Protection Agency regulations that could close hundreds more coal-fired generation plants. At the same time, China, which consumes 45 percent of the world's coal, is steeply reducing the burning of coal to combat urban air pollution. And the strength of the dollar is reducing the competitiveness of American coal producers.

As a result, coal production has been plunging in the United States, falling 15 percent since 2008. Still, stockpiles are mounting at mines as coal-fired power plants shut down month after month.

The Energy Department expects a further drop of 70 million tons in coal production this year mainly because of a 7 percent decrease in demand by the electric power sector, which, in addition to natural gas, is increasingly turning to renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

Only a decade ago, coal supplied roughly half of the source of power for the country's utilities; that percentage has dropped to about 40 percent. The Energy Department projects that coal will continue to lose market share over the next decade, although it will continue to be an important source of energy.

"We are going to continue to see bankruptcies so the industry can get down to a size in terms of total capacity and output to have the financial wherewithal to be attractive assets at depressed prices and then operate profitably," said John Lichtenstein, an Accenture Strategy managing director who advises coal producers.

Alpha, which is based in Bristol, Va., suffered four straight years of losses in large part because most of its business is in Appalachia, where mining operations tend to be more expensive than in other parts of the country.

For the last three years it has had to close much of its fleet of mines to reduce costs, shaving its payroll by roughly 4,000 workers, or more than a quarter of its work force.

To make matters worse, Wyoming regulators recently told the company it no longer qualified for a program that allowed the company not to buy insurance to cover future mine cleanup costs.

Alpha, which still operates 50 mines in several states, said it secured a financing package of \$692 million arranged by Citigroup.

It is at least the seventh coal company to go into bankruptcy over the last year. Most of the others have been small, although another major company, Walter Energy, filed for bankruptcy protection last month with a plan to give control of the company to senior creditors.

Such a turn of events was hard to envision even five years ago, as Alpha and other coal companies went on a buying spree. Coal prices were high, global demand was galloping along with the surging Chinese economy, and earnings were peaking.

Alpha acquired Foundation Coal to extend its operations to the western Powder River Basin, where coal can be cheaply mined off the surface, and the promise of exports to Asia was high.

Then it made the Massey Energy purchase in 2011 after that company went into a tailspin following the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in West Virginia, in which 29 miners died in an explosion. The acquisition was based on an assumption that developing countries had an insatiable appetite for Appalachia's high-heat-producing coal for steel making.

Wall Street analysts said the reorganization of the industry was inevitable and that the losers would be the equity holders and the banks, and owners of the debt acquired at face value. But much of that debt has already changed hands at pennies to the dollar, and the new holders of the debt will most likely acquire most of the new equity in the companies after they are reorganized.

The other possible savior for the coal industry, according to some analysts, is China, although that could take some policy changes in Beijing.

"We could see foreign capital coming into the industry within two years," Mr. Lichtenstein said, "when things hit bottom and if the dollar weakens."

New York Times (NY):

[No link available]

A Climate Plan Businesses Can Like

WITH the release of President Obama's Clean Power Plan, a flood of legal challenges will begin. Already, opponents have denounced the new rule limiting carbon pollution as unconstitutional. Behind the rattling sabers, however, there's a quieter story worth noticing. Many big players in the electric power industry will gain more with the rule in place than if the courts strike it down.

In fact, many power companies have worked with the administration to get the best possible deal, and with states to discuss compliance strategies. Given their financial interests, some of these utilities may even wind up helping the government defend the rule.

The plan sends a clear market signal that low-carbon energy will be profitable. Many of the country's most powerful investor-owned utilities, including MidAmerican, Southern Company and Exelon, have made big investments in low carbon sources like wind, solar or nuclear power. Their decision to do so was driven by a mix of market opportunities, investor preferences, tax credits and state and federal air pollution standards.

In the last several years, utilities also have begun shifting away from coal toward cheaper natural gas. What they want now is a clear and predictable federal plan that will help them profit from these investments, and reward them for making more.

The president's plan does just that. It limits carbon pollution at the nation's oldest and dirtiest power plants and allows them to meet those limits in a variety of ways; for example, by becoming more efficient, operating less often or investing in cleaner energy sources.

Incentives in the plan will encourage the development of renewable energy. States can award credits to companies that buy or build renewable projects, and these companies can bank them even before the compliance period for meeting emissions limits begins. The federal government will match these state credits, which will help businesses comply with those limits. With these incentives, it pays to produce clean energy.

Any utility that already owns cleaner forms of energy, or hopes to build them, can profit -- whether it is Southern Company constructing new nuclear reactors and steadily expanding its portfolio of renewables, or MidAmerican, a national leader in installed wind power that may look to expand its market.

Stand-alone solar and wind companies are expected to publicly back the plan because the demand for their renewable power will only increase.

In an era of flat electricity demand, utilities have been hard-pressed to get approval from state regulators to build new power projects. But the plan's clean-energy incentives offer utilities the opportunity to make investments that will enable state utility commissions to justify rates so utilities can recover their costs.

What's more, knowing there will be new demand for wind and solar energy in a will encourage investors to build new transmission lines. Meanwhile, utilities like Calpine, which own efficient natural gas plants, will be winners because the plan creates financial incentives to switch from coal to less-polluting gas.

Finally, utilities like Pacific Gas and Electric that design innovative ways to reduce energy demand, or offer energy retrofit and appliance rebate programs, also stand to gain, because energy efficiency now will be a valuable commodity.

Understanding these behind-the-scenes dynamics makes it clear that much of industry opposition to the rule is really just posturing. In any case, the legal jockeying is only part of the story.

Many power companies are fully prepared to implement the rule. And they are well positioned to

press their states to help them, for instance by adopting statewide caps on carbon pollution, and allowing polluters to trade credits to let them cut emissions in the most economically efficient way. States could enlarge these markets to lower costs by joining regional trading schemes. Similar trading programs have already proved highly successful in addressing other pollution, like acid rain.

The question is whether some utilities will vocally support a rule that is in their financial interest, or remain on the sidelines. Clearly, it would bolster the government's legal defense for major power companies to reinforce the argument that the new carbon standards are achievable at a reasonable cost without jeopardizing the electricity system's reliability.

And just as it will be important to have supportive states on the government side to counter states that challenge the plan, it will also be crucial to have some industry players there. For conservative judges who may be skeptical of regulation, industry voices can make a big difference.

In any event, even companies that oppose the rule will continue to work quietly with the Environmental Protection Agency and the states on implementation. The legal challenges will drag on, and politicians will take their stands. The coal industry will say the sky is falling. But behind the scenes, real work is being done and progress is being made toward a lower carbon future.

New York Times (NY):

[No link available]

A Tough, Achievable Climate Plan

President Obama's Clean Power Plan, announced on Monday, is unquestionably the most important step the administration has taken in the fight against climate change.

It imposes the first nationwide limits on carbon dioxide pollution from power plants, the source of 31 percent of America's total greenhouse gas emissions. It will shut down hundreds of coal-fired power plants and give fresh momentum to carbon-free energy sources like wind and solar power, and possibly next-generation nuclear plants. And when taken together with the administration's other initiatives, chiefly the fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, it reinforces Mr. Obama's credibility and leverage with other nations heading into the United Nations climate change conference in Paris in December.

The plan's opponents in industry, the states and Congress are already gathering their forces to try to undermine it on Capitol Hill and in the courts, claiming that the plan will cost thousands of jobs, drive electricity prices through the roof and irreparably damage the economy. But the truth is this: There is nothing radical about it.

For more than a decade, carbon emissions from power plants have been declining -- a result of a shift in energy generation from coal to cheap and abundant natural gas, regulation of other pollutants, like mercury, which has caused utilities to shut down older plants, and investments in cleaner fuels and energy efficiency.

Coal generation, which 10 years ago provided just over half the nation's electricity, last year provided 39

percent. Meanwhile, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power -- driven by federal tax credits, improvements in technology and state mandates -- have risen sharply in that time. The new rules will codify and accelerate these trends, making sure that the shift to cleaner fuels continues quickly. Their main goal is a nationwide reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 32 percent by 2030, from a 2005 baseline. Among their many selling points is flexibility: The rules assign each state a specific target for reducing carbon pollution from plants inside its borders, but allows them to develop custom-tailored plans for meeting these targets. States can choose from a menu of options to meet their targets: switching from coal to natural gas, ramping up wind and solar, reducing energy consumption with so-called demand-side efficiencies, engaging in cap-and-trade systems with other states. These individual state targets are a result of many months of painstaking negotiations between Washington and the states. Despite this, the plan faces formidable challenges in Congress and the courts. Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, for instance, has begun a pre-emptive strike against the rules, urging states not to submit the required plans (a weirdly anti-states' rights strategy, since the rules authorize the Environmental Protection Agency to impose its own plans on states that do not comply). But the greater threats lie in the courts, where opponents are preparing to argue that the plan usurps states' rights, exceeds the agency's authority or is deficient in other ways. And then there is the little matter of the coming presidential election. Even if the courts rule that the new regulations are fully consistent with the E.P.A.'s authority under the Clean Air Act, a future president could rescind or delay them. Hillary Rodham Clinton has said she supports the plan and will carry it out. Republicans are unanimously opposed. Given the rules' importance -- to the country, to Mr. Obama's negotiating leverage and, not least, to the planet -- the politicians will bear watching.

RHODE ISLAND

-
-

Providence Journal (RI):

<http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20150804/NEWS/150809749/13943>

\$700-million 'clean' gas-fired power plant proposed in Burrillville

[Article Does Not Copy]

8/4/15, 12:00 am

PENNSYLVANIA

Standard Speaker (PA):

<http://standardspeaker.com/news/pennsylvania-officials-respond-to-plan-to-lower-emissions-from-power-plants-1.1922189>

Pennsylvania officials respond to plan to lower emissions from power plants

BRENDAN GIBBONS, STAFF WRITERPublished: August 4, 2015

A federal proposal to combat climate change drew mixed reactions from Pennsylvania officials, who alternately focused on its environment and public health effects versus its impact on the state's economy.

The Obama Administration's final Clean Power Plan, announced Monday, will force carbon dioxide cutbacks in Pennsylvania, an electricity-exporting state whose power plants emit the third-highest amount of carbon dioxide in the U.S. per year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data.

The rule is the first in American history targeting carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants, the highest-emitting sector in the country. The vast majority of international climate scientists point to carbon dioxide as the most significant of greenhouse gases causing of global warming.

The EPA's final rule will require Pennsylvania to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide pollution per unit of electricity by about 35 percent of 2012 levels by 2030.

The plan offers states the choice of how to meet progressively stringent goals, the first of which takes effect in 2022. Gov. Tom Wolf's administration must now decide how to implement the plan, a task the governor addressed in a Monday statement.

"My administration is committed to making the Clean Power Plan work for Pennsylvania," Wolf said. "Clean coal," natural gas, solar, wind and other power sources will all be part of his strategy, he said.

State environmental secretary John Quigley said cutting power plant pollution, using lower-emitting natural gas, supporting nuclear plants, adding more renewable energy and improving energy efficiency will all be part of the state's plan.

Most of Northeastern Pennsylvania's existing electricity generation is already carbon-free. Its largest generator is Talen Energy's Susquehanna Steam nuclear plant near Berwick. Several local wind farms and the hydroelectric plant at Lake Wallenpaupack recently spun off from PPL also provide energy with no emissions.

However, three large natural gas-fired power plants are proposed or under construction in the region, including a 1,500-megawatt plant in Jessup. Much smaller electricity generators at Keystone Sanitary Landfill and PEI Power Corp.'s Archbald station emit carbon dioxide when they burn landfill gas. UGI also operates a small natural gas plant near Hunlock Creek in Luzerne County.

Northeastern Pennsylvania's federal legislators reactions to the plan largely followed party lines.

In November, Democratic Sen. Bob Casey submitted a 22-page comment commending the EPA's purpose and intent but urging the agency to not unfairly burden Pennsylvania with renewable energy mandates relative to other states.

On Monday, Republican Sen. Pat Toomey praised coal through a spokesperson as a "domestically sourced, low-cost form of energy which helps sustain jobs for Pennsylvania and beyond."

"Nevertheless, the Obama administration continues to implement policies that will make energy more expensive for hard-working Pennsylvanians while destroying good, family-sustaining jobs," he said.

In his own statement, U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-17, Moosic, said the plan would "protect public health, invest in clean, renewable energy development, boost energy efficiency measures and lower electric bills in the long run."

U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta, R-11, Hazleton, said in a statement that Pennsylvania "will be a clear loser" under this plan, which could place its 36,000 coal jobs at risk.

U.S. Rep. Tom Marino, R-10, Williamsport, is still reviewing the full text of the 1,560-page rule, released this afternoon, spokesman Ryan Shucard said.

"But if the EPA's history, especially under this administration, shows us anything, it's a bad rule," he said in an email.

The EPA made several tweaks to Pennsylvania's requirements after a six-month public comment period, slightly relaxing interim and final cutback goals compared to those first proposed in June 2014. The agency also updated its estimate of Pennsylvania's 2012 emissions based on public comments.

The EPA will publish the final rule Sept. 4 in the Federal Register. The state Department of Environmental Protection plans to announce details about public hearings across the state soon.

As the governor and DEP create the plan, the state Public Utility Commission will study its effect on utilities and consumers, Chairman Gladys M. Brown said in a statement. The agency will also study how the rules interact with state programs, including Pennsylvania's alternative energy portfolio standards that require electric utilities to draw power from a certain percentage of alternative energy.

Pennsylvania's initial plan is due June 30, 2016.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (PA):

<http://powersource.post-gazette.com/news/environment/2015/08/03/Obama-to-unveil-tougher-climate-change-plan-global-warming-power-plants-emissions/stories/201508030131>

Gov. Wolf praises president's clean air plan

August 3, 2015 11:19 PM

By Don Hopey / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The federal Clean Power Plan, a far-reaching and controversial attempt by the Obama administration to come to grips with greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, requires Pennsylvania to cut carbon emissions by 32 percent from 2012 levels.

In announcing the plan Monday afternoon, President Barack Obama quoted Pope Francis in characterizing climate change as a moral issue and said the new rule is "the single most important step" taken by the U.S. in battling climate change.

The rule, the first to target carbon pollution from power plants, also seeks emissions reductions of 32 percent nationwide by 2030, although some states will need to reduce emissions by higher percentages and some will be allowed lower reductions. The final version of the long-debated rule gives states more time to fashion individual emissions reduction plans and extends by two years, to 2022, the deadline for implementation of the state plans.

Fossil fuel-fired power plants are the largest source of climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., contributing about 40 percent of the country's carbon emissions.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the reductions will provide public health and climate benefits worth an estimated \$34 billion to \$54 billion a year, at a cost of \$8.4

billion annually. Although electricity rates are projected to increase, increased energy efficiency will reduce electric bills by \$7 a month by 2030, according to EPA estimates.

Gov. Tom Wolf said the federally mandated rule is an opportunity for the state to tailor a plan that addresses climate change and improves public health, the economy and power system.

“My administration is committed to making the Clean Power Plan work for Pennsylvania,” Mr. Wolf said. “Working with the Legislature, industry leaders and citizens, we will create a plan to ensure these new rules are applied fairly, allow for adjustments and that they create economic opportunities for the commonwealth’s energy economy.”

Pennsylvania power plants put out 48 percent of the state’s carbon pollution, or 109 million metric tons in 2013, according to the EPA, the equivalent of emissions from about 23 million cars.

Carbon pollution emissions in the state already have declined by 12 percent since 2008, a reduction attributable to the closing of many old and inefficient coal-fired power plants and the conversion of others to cleaner-burning natural gas.

But Republicans in Congress, the coal industry, manufacturing groups and some electric power producers have voiced strong opposition, saying additional emissions reductions will increase consumer costs, cause job losses, cause electric supply reliability problems during the transition to cleaner energy sources, and will be ineffective in reducing global warming. The final rule also was criticized for offering fewer options to states for reducing carbon emissions and relying more heavily on higher-priced renewable energy sources.

A protracted legal battle is likely.

One mining company, Ohio-based Murray Energy Corp., said it will pursue five lawsuits seeking to stop its implementation. The National Mining Association also said it will ask the EPA to voluntarily hold off on implementing the rule until the courts have an opportunity to rule on its legality.

The Pennsylvania Coal Alliance struck a more measured tone, noting that Mr. Wolf and the state Legislature are on record as supporting continued coal use as part of the mix of fuels for generating electricity. In a statement Monday, John Pippy, alliance executive director, said the state needs coal to maintain its place as “one of the top generators and exporters of electricity in the nation.”

He said a state Department of Environmental Protection review released last year found Pennsylvania would need to reduce coal usage in power plants by 70 percent to meet its carbon reduction goal, an unrealistic expectation.

Democrats, most environmental organizations, scientists and air regulators lined up behind the plan, citing its flexibility, benefits to public health and the environment, and its realistic approach to addressing climate change.

The Allegheny County Health Department, which regulates emissions of large industrial sources within the county, will review and comment on the state's emissions reduction plan, due by the end of 2016, and offer suggestions, said Jim Thompson, the department's deputy director of environmental health.

"Climate change is something we should all be concerned about, and this plan will have the secondary effects of also reducing ground level ozone and soot from our heaviest polluters, coal-fired power plants," Mr. Thompson said.

Larry Schweiger, president and chief executive officer of PennFuture, a statewide environmental organization, called the Clean Power Plan "an essential step toward mitigating climate change and improving air quality."

Trib Total Media (PA):

<http://triblive.com/business/headlines/8851882-74/plan-power-coal#axzz3hsQTsTYu>

Obama's Clean Power plan doesn't change much; opponents remain firm

By David Conti Monday, Aug. 3, 2015, 11:06 p.m.

The Obama administration's latest proposal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants adjusted individual goals that states must meet and gave them more time and tools to do so.

Reaction to the plan to cut carbon pollution by 32 percent over the next 15 years showed little change from last summer, though, when the first version brought street protests to Pittsburgh during public hearings.

Environmental advocates hailed the so-called Clean Power Plan and President Obama for taking a necessary first step to reduce climate change. The energy industry, Republicans and coal advocates decried it as an attack on fossil fuels that will drive up costs, kill more mining jobs and destabilize the electricity grid. Both sides agree the courts will decide its legality, and opponents promised lawsuits.

"There will be cynics who say this can't be done. They'll claim this plan is a war on coal to scare up votes," the president said in defending his plan.

The first federal limits on carbon emissions, proposed last year and finalized Monday, instruct

states to establish plans over the next several years to meet interim goals by 2022 — two years later than first proposed — and final goals by 2030. They allow states to use several approaches, provide an opportunity for them to collaborate and trade energy credits, and include a “safety valve” feature in case grids are threatened.

“We will make certain that we craft a Pennsylvania solution that protects the state's vital role as a net electricity exporter,” state Department of Environmental Protection Secretary John Quigley said in a statement applauding the plan.

Before the final rules were issued, Quigley told the Tribune-Review that maintaining coal's role in power generation would be a “challenge” in the long term — coal plants emit the most carbon pollution — and that Pennsylvania was doing computer modeling to calculate impacts. A spokesman said the department was still reviewing the rule's newest version to determine local impacts.

“Both the Wolf administration and the Pennsylvania legislature have repeatedly stated that coal use will remain a critical component of any blueprint for a state strategy to comply with the federal carbon emissions rule,” said John Pippy, CEO of the Pennsylvania Coal Alliance, which has blasted the rule since its proposal. “Utilities and grid operators nationwide have testified on the importance of maintaining coal's place in the energy mix as a baseload supplier to safeguard against rate spikes and blackouts.”

The new version eases the interim and final goals that Pennsylvania must meet to a 34 percent reduction from 37 percent. But because of other changes in the plan involving calculations, the change is minimal, said Jackson Morris, director of Eastern energy at the National Resources Defense Council.

The real change for Pennsylvania, he said, is that the governor's office supports the plan. Republican Tom Corbett, who left office in January, opposed it, though his administration did not sue over the plan as other coal-heavy states did.

The state Public Utility Commission said it was reviewing the new version's impact on the power grid. The commission raised concerns about reliability in its testimony about the initial proposal.

“We are happy to see the revisions to the original proposal, including the ‘safety valve’ feature, which will help to prevent power disruptions,” chairwoman Gladys Brown said in a statement.

“Pennsylvania is a huge player in this,” Morris said, noting its power plants export a third of what they produce, and that the state serves as the anchor for regional grid operator PJM interconnection.

That makes the potential impact here more dangerous, opponents said.

“By any reasonable measure, these aggressive, far-reaching rules will increase energy costs for consumers and businesses in order to produce a negligible reduction in global carbon emissions,” said Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry CEO Gene Barr.

Among the businesses concerned about higher costs from the plan is a steel industry dealing with lower demand and cheap imports.

“The leading steel-producing states in the U.S. are heavily dependent on coal for electricity production,” said Thomas J. Gibson, CEO of the American Iron and Steel Institute. “This rule will have a disproportionate impact on coal-fired utilities and, in turn, impede economic growth for steelmakers.”

Coal companies squeezed by low prices and accelerating closures of power plants that burn their fuel look to be affected the most. Ohio-based Murray Energy Corp., whose lawsuits against the proposed plan were tossed out because it wasn't final, vowed to file anew.

“American families and businesses will still bear the brunt of huge electricity cost increases and less power system reliability,” CEO Robert Murray said in a statement.

The plan removed energy efficiency improvements as a “building block” for state plans to meet goals, though EPA expects such programs to lower usage and bills. The final version puts more emphasis on adding renewable sources such as wind and solar.

“The commonwealth must use this opportunity to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon, clean energy future by creating a state-based plan that is both aspirational and well-suited to Pennsylvania,” said Larry Schweiger, CEO of the environmental group PennFuture and an advocate for renewables.

State lawmakers must approve the Pennsylvania plan before Gov. Tom Wolf's administration can submit it to the EPA. Wolf's office promised public hearings on the plan.

-

Observer-Reporter (PA):

<http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20150803/NEWS01/150809824>

Support, scorn for final Clean Power Plan rule

By Michael Bradwell Business Editor – 8/3/15

Groups representing both the energy and environmental sectors provided reaction to Monday's release of the Environmental Protection Agency's final rule of the Clean Power Plan.

The rule cracks down on CO2 emissions from power generating plants under Section 111d of the

Clean Air Act, and is the final, tougher version of proposed regulations the EPA announced in 2012 and 2014.

The Obama administration estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030. The actual price won't be known until states decide how they'll reach their targets.

According to the EPA, power plants account for about one-third of all U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source of air pollution.

The final version imposes stricter CO2 limits on states than was previously stated: a 32 percent cut by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. Obama's proposed version last year called for a 30 percent cut.

On a day in which coal producer Alpha Natural Resources filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, some of the response to the final rule was predictable, but at least one company said it would sue the Obama administration for what it called a "flagrantly unlawful" plan.

Murray Energy Murray Energy Corp., the country's largest underground coal-mining company, said Monday it will proceed with five lawsuits challenging the Clean Power Plan.

"This illegal rule will adversely restructure the electric power system in America and will force every state to radically change their energy policies," Murray said in a statement.

"It will dramatically increase the cost of electricity for all Americans, with no environmental benefit whatsoever.

"Our citizens on fixed incomes will not be able to pay their electric bills, and our manufacturers of products for the global marketplace will not be able to compete," said Murray.

PA Coal Alliance John Pippy, CEO of the Pennsylvania Coal Alliance, which represents the state's coal industry and touts the economic and social benefit to the employees, businesses, communities and consumers who depend on affordable and reliable energy from coal, gave a more measured response:

"Both the Wolf Administration and the Pennsylvania Legislature have repeatedly stated that coal use will remain a critical component of any blueprint for a state strategy to comply with the federal carbon emissions rule," Pippy said.

"Utilities and grid operators nationwide have testified on the importance of maintaining coal's place in the energy mix as a baseload supplier to safeguard against rate spikes and blackouts.

"I believe (DEP) Secretary (John) Quigley understands this is especially key for a state like Pennsylvania as one of the top generators and exporters of electricity in the nation. We're looking forward to working with our policymakers to ensure coal continues to supply the commonwealth and surrounding states with low-cost electricity while keeping Pennsylvanians

employed and the lights on for manufacturers, businesses and residents.”

National Mining Association “EPA’s final Clean Power Plan reflects political expediency, not reality for supplying the nation with low cost reliable power,” the NMA said. “Left in place are targets for replacing affordable energy with costly energy. These will burden Americans with increasingly high costs for an essential service and a less reliable electric grid for delivering it.

“Postponing the initial deadline merely forces ratepayers into steeper cost increases in later years than originally proposed. American households and businesses will be forced to accept higher electricity rates in exchange for what EPA admits are negligible environmental gains. Low-income families will be hit hardest now as they were before.”

The NMA said it filed a request Monday with EPA to stay the rule “while the courts have the opportunity to determine the lawfulness of the agency’s attempt to commandeer the nation’s electric grid. If EPA denies our request we will ask the courts to do so.”

UMWA Cecil Roberts, international president of the United Mine Workers of America, said the union was continuing to review the final rule Monday, but vowed to fight for miners and retirees and their communities that would be affected by the rule.

“The draft rule the EPA proposed last year put a terrible burden on coal miners and their communities, especially those in Appalachia,” Roberts said. “From all accounts that have been published so far, the final rule is even worse.

“It’s hard to draw any other conclusion than this: The people who will suffer the most from this rule are working and retired coal miners and their families, primarily in Appalachia. These hard-working miners have given their health, their limbs and far too often their lives to create the foundation of the America we live in today. We cannot solve global climate change on their backs. They deserve much better than the fate this rule has in store in them.

“We will have more to say about this in coming days, but I can assure our members today that we will take every possible step to fight for their jobs, their pensions, their health care and their future.”

PennFuture According to the EPA, the rule will provide as much as \$45 billion in climate and public health benefits, while preventing as many as 6,600 premature deaths and as many as 90,000 asthma attacks in children.

In a telephone news conference sponsored by PennFuture that included a number of environmental groups within the state, some representatives acknowledged there will be legal challenges to the rule, but said they believed it would withstand them.

The state has good reason to develop a plan that reduces pollution, said PennFuture President Larry Schweiger, who noted the Keystone State is the third-largest carbon-emitter in the United States.

“Pennsylvania is ready for” a cleaner air strategy, added Joe Minott, executive director of the Clean Air Council, who noted the state already lowered carbon emissions by 15 percent in the past decade.

While extolling the health benefits of cleaner air, the participants said the state will need to craft a plan that also will ensure good-paying jobs and affordable energy from a greater reliance on renewables.

-
-
-

Philadelphia Inquirer (PA):

http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20150803_Better_fuels_than_fossils.html

Better fuels than fossils

INQUIRER EDITORIAL BOARD

POSTED: Monday, August 3, 2015, 1:06 AM

Energy policy dinosaurs are trying to trample new Environmental Protection Agency rules designed to cut carbon pollution from its most prolific source: coal-fired electricity plants.

Republicans in Congress and 10 governors are fighting the Clean Power Plan, which would regulate carbon dioxide from coal plants. Each state is supposed to draft its own plan. Some governors say they won't, but that would only result in the Environmental Protection Agency's writing a state plan for them.

Meanwhile, congressional Republicans threatening to attach budget riders that would kill the federal air-quality plan are setting the table for a showdown that threatens another government shutdown.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has been especially insistent. His lawsuits to block the federal plan have failed, but he is seeking yet another hearing to make the specious argument that 15 years isn't enough time to cut carbon dioxide emissions to 30 percent of 2005 levels.

Pruitt's histrionics ignore the consequences of failing to act. The new EPA rules could save up to \$93 billion in health-care costs by 2030 while preventing 6,600 premature deaths and 150,000

asthma attacks in children.

Carbon pollution contributes to global warming, which can no longer be dismissed as a fantasy, even by elected officials who appear to be owned by the fossil-fuel industry. Global warming's impact can be seen in melting glaciers, rising sea levels, droughts, wildfires, and floods, which have taken lives and cost taxpayers billions to repair damages.

The first five months of 2015 were the hottest on record. The 10 hottest years on record have occurred since 1998. Without preventive action now, we can expect more heat waves with devastating effects on people and wildlife. Ocean water will become more acidic and less hospitable for corals and crustaceans. On land, expect more invasive plants and insects that devastate forests.

Opponents of the new emissions plan are calling attention to the jobs in coal and supporting industries that will be lost once the EPA rules go into effect. But a recent Economic Policy Institute analysis indicates that there would be a net gain in employment due to jobs created in the clean-energy and conservation sectors.

In other words, instead of fighting the emissions plan, the governors who oppose it should be putting down their bullhorns and picking up their phones to talk new energy companies into coming to their states to help absorb expected job losses. Workers facing unemployment can be retrained for clean-energy jobs, especially in technical fields that could grow significantly.

There's no need for this country to act like some dinosaur waiting for climate change to make it extinct. The Clean Power Plan will help accelerate the development of clean, safe, and profitable energy sources that wean us off toxic fuels.

VERMONT

Montpelier Times Argus (VT):

<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20150804/OPINION01/708049943>

A clear mandate

August 04,2015

With Monday's announcement by the Obama administration that it is unveiling a Clean Power Plan, we find it encouraging we finally have a strategy that's right for our environment and our economy. In fact, the plan by the Environmental Protection Agency, which outlines the first national standards for reducing carbon emissions from fossil fuel power plants, actually encourages states to work together to reduce carbon emissions on a national scale.

The Clean Power Plan sets the first-ever carbon pollution standards for power plants, requiring each state to create its own plan for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels, by 2030.

Climate change deniers are now faced with a very public indictment that works with public opinion and against them.

The plan provides broad flexibility for states to design and implement cost-effective programs, tailored to their own specific circumstances, to comply with the federal requirements. This plan sets out to reduce carbon pollution by hundreds of millions of tons over the next decade.

Vermont has been a leader in this regard already. Our state energy plan, adopted just a few years ago, takes an aptly aggressive stance.

The governor issued the following statement after Monday's EPA's announcement: "Today is a good day for the planet. President Obama has outlined the boldest step to date to combat climate change and ensure a livable world for future generations. ... We will move towards an energy future that relies on renewable energy, protects our planet, and creates new jobs for hard working Americans.

"The critics of today's announcement should look to the example of Vermont, where we have taken the lead in implementing the President's vision for a clean energy future and shown that doing so can be good for ratepayers and the economy. In the last four and a half years, we have increased by more than 10 times the amount of solar installed or on the way, doubled our Standard Offer program, expanded net metering by sevenfold, cut the price of solar in half, and

increased wind generation by 20 times. All of that activity supports a clean energy economy with over 15,000 jobs and has helped lead to two successive electric bill decreases for customers of Vermont's largest utility."

That's certainly impressive, and the state should be held up as an example of what can be done on a larger scale. Vermonters should be commended, and are in most environmental circles.

However, there's much more work to be done, and the politics clouding this issue may go from smoke to fire in short order.

As Sen. Patrick Leahy points out, the challenge is mounting. "In the past, the true costs of carbon pollution have been hidden and passed along to everyone else. With no effective accountability, there has been little incentive and too little effort to improve public health or to minimize the contributions to climate change. It is the proper role of government, acting for all the people of the nation, to set overall rules so we can see hidden costs and deal with them. By setting clear rules, we can begin meeting these goals that indisputably will benefit all Americans, and spark our emerging clean-energy economy."

Obviously, we did not need standards to tell us that climate change is here. It is real and it has serious consequences.

As Rep. Peter Welch noted Monday, "You don't have to go any further than communities across Vermont to hear about its early impacts. Just ask the businesses and families wiped out by Tropical Storm Irene. Or the ski lift operator worried about losing his job as the season shortens. Or the farmer planning for changes in the productivity of her crops."

The problem can be solved, but it will take an army to change attitudes and make appreciable reversible change in our carbon footprint.

President Obama will be skewered by the right for this bold statement. But if it proves at all effective, that boldness will have enormous implications for carbon emissions that are, without question, a leading cause of climate change.

Now, with a mandate in hand, it's time to start really fixing the problem.

Burlington Free Press (VT)/Associated Press:

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/vermont/2015/08/03/obama-power-plan-vermont-reacts/31083619/>

VT praises Obama's clean power plan

DAVE GRAM 9:09 p.m. EDT August 3, 2015

MONTPELIER — Vermont can breathe easy — the state won't be required by new federal rules to lower power plant emissions. And it can breathe more easily still — state officials say the rules will mean less pollution blowing into the state from coal-fired generators in the Midwest.

Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii are the only states exempted from rules the Environmental Protection Agency issued Monday that require other states to cut power-plant emissions by 32 percent by 2030, said Chris Recchia, commissioner of the Public Service Department.

Recchia and Deb Markowitz, secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, said the EPA's Clean Power Plan appears aimed at applying nationwide policies that Vermont has been pursuing for years.

"We are in much better shapes than other states," said Recchia, whose department regulates utilities. "Finally the true cost of energy and the true value of the renewables we've been pursuing will come to fruition."

Markowitz said Vermont is "really in an interesting position here."

"We're exempt from the requirements of the new rule, but we get to benefit from its implementation," Markowitz said.

Vermont's largest source of electricity is hydropower imported from Canada. The Green

Mountain State has some in-state dams and two wood-burning power generators, in Burlington and Ryegate.

Markowitz said the rules are likely to prompt other states to mimic Vermont and other northeastern states in the formation of regional agreements to limit carbon emissions. The Northeast's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has capped carbon emissions and ratcheted the cap down year by year, while allowing states under their caps to sell pollution allowances to those struggling to stay within the caps.

Vermont has used the income to support energy efficiency and renewable-energy programs.

Monday's news about the EPA rules had Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin crowing.

"The critics of today's announcement should look to the example of Vermont where we have taken the lead in implementing the President's vision for a clean energy future and shown that doing so can be good for ratepayers and the economy," the governor said in a statement.

The Ravenswood Generating Station uses natural gas, fuel oil and kerosene to power boilers in Long Island City, New York. President Obama unveiled a new climate-change strategy that, among other measures, aims to get the country's existing power plants to reduce emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. (Photo: JUSTIN LANE/EPA)

He pointed to the state's booming solar and wind power industries, which he said had created more than 15,000 jobs.

Markowitz and Recchia said imposing new carbon emission restrictions on states to Vermont's west is expected to result in cleaner air in the Green Mountains. Nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide, two principle components of acid rain, are emitted along with carbon, as is mercury.

Mercury, a potent neurotoxin, is deposited by prevailing west winds in Vermont's lakes and rivers. It has prompted state Department of Health warnings to limit fish consumption. Pregnant or nursing women and children up to 6 are warned against eating several popular types of sport fish caught in Vermont, including walleye, lake trout, smallmouth and largemouth bass.

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia MetroNews (WV):

<http://wvmetronews.com/2015/08/04/tomblin-to-weigh-options-before-deciding-on-response-to-clean-power-plan/>

Tomblin to weigh options before deciding on response to Clean Power Plan

By Jeff Jenkins in News | August 04, 2015 at 2:12PM

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — It's too early to tell if West Virginia will decide not to comply with the provisions of the federal Clean Power Plan, a spokesman for Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said Tuesday.

"I think it is fair say that the governor will consider all options and listen to folks, but at this point, the next step for the administration is for the DEP to do some real hard work and look at these numbers," Tomblin Communications Director Chris Stadelman said.

The Clean Power Plan, finalized Monday, requires states to reduce emissions from coal-fired power plants by some 30 percent over 15 years. The states have to use certain building blocks to reach those numbers. Several states have already said they won't comply.

"I think that is a great option for many states and I hope a lot of states will do it," American Coalition of Clean Coal Electricity Mike Duncan said Tuesday on MetroNews 'Talkline'.

West Virginia Coal Association President Bill Raney also hopes Tomblin decides not to comply.

"We hope he will join with the other states. We hope a lot of states will do it because I think that's the most compelling effort to be made to the federal government," Raney said.

The governor did call the requirements of the Clean Power Plan "unattainable" in a statement released Monday.

A new state law passed by the Republican-controlled legislature requires any state response to go before them first. The law gives the DEP an 18-month deadline. The clock is ticking, Stadelman said.

"The DEP will do a feasibility study to figure out how realistic is it to even submit a plan and if we submit a plan what would it look like," Stadelman said. The federal EPA has said states that don't comply will have plans submitted for them through the federal government.

Duncan's pro-coal group is already trying to get a federal court to put a hold on the Clean Power Plan.

"Stop this process until we can fully litigate it because there is so much impending problems that are going to occur," Duncan said.

Impacts on West Virginia would include severance and property tax revenues, employment and other areas, Stadelman said.

“We know it would involve significant disruptions to our employment base and our tax base,” he said.

West Virginia MetroNews (WV):

<http://wvmetronews.com/2015/08/04/roberts-says-coal-facing-worst-period-of-time-in-unions-history/>

Roberts says coal facing ‘worst period of time’ in union’s history

By Jeff Jenkins in News | August 04, 2015 at 1:11PM

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — An international labor leader says coal is facing its toughest challenge with the current market and the Clean Power Plan finalized Monday by President Barack Obama.

“This is the worst period of time in our history with respect to coal,” United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts said Tuesday on MetroNews ‘Talkline’.

The current struggles, which have included dozens of coal company bankruptcies and uncertainty, is only rivaled by the Great Depression, Roberts said, which impacted the entire economy.

The UMWA continued to review the possible impacts from the Clean Power Plan Tuesday. What the union sees, according to Roberts, is a production decrease of millions of tons of coal a year, which will mean fewer jobs.

“It’s probably going to be around 100 million tons of coal being used in Appalachia, mined, burned and that’s a dramatic, dramatic reduction...and we all know what that means,” Roberts said.

The plan requires states to reduce emissions from coal-fired power plants by 30 percent in 15 years. The federal government is promoting retraining for coal communities. That response is unacceptable, West Virginia Coal Association President Bill Raney said on ‘Talkline’.

“We’ve lost jobs and now (the federal government) is going to send all of this money in to retrain coal miners and diversify the economy? You talk about the height of hypocrisy. I tell you brother, that’s it,” Raney said.

Thousands of coal mining jobs were eliminated in the 1950s with mechanization improvements but Roberts said those miners went to places like Detroit and Cleveland for work. He said those options are no longer available for the laid off miners of today.

Roberts and Raney both believe coal has a future in America’s energy portfolio. They both agree the price and demand for metallurgical coal will make a comeback and some of the larger bankrupted companies will become leaner but ready to do business. The state must be ready too, Raney said.

“30, 32, 33 percent of the electricity in this country is going to be made with the use of coal for a long, long time,” Raney predicted. “We want to be certain that we here in West Virginia are doing everything we can to get our costs in line so that we can continue to be part of that.”

Coal miners are being ignored by President Obama, the EPA and some in the Democratic Party, according to Roberts.

“Coal miners have allowed this country to win two world wars. Coal miners have given up their lives to the tune of 105,000 coal miners have been killed, 100,000 coal miners have died from Black Lung. We have gone off to war at higher numbers than anybody else. We are the most patriotic people on earth and this is what we get? This is what we get?”

West Virginia Public Broadcasting (WV):

<http://wvpublic.org/post/clean-power-plan-criticized-state-officials>

Clean Power Plan Criticized by State Officials

By BETH VORHEES • 6 HOURS AGO – 8/4/15

On West Virginia Morning, Ashton Marra joins host Beth Vorhees live in our studio to report on the reactions by government officials to the EPA’s new rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Also, Glynis Board revisits a report issued in June that outlines how the state can comply with the Clean Power Plan.

[[Listen Listening...14:38]] Click here to listen to West Virginia Morning Tuesday, August 4, 2015.

Bluefield Daily Telegraph (WV):

http://www.bdtonline.com/news/alpha-files-chapter/article_b54279f4-3a55-11e5-81d6-d72fb4e51446.html

Alpha files Chapter 11

Posted on Aug 4, 2015 5:00 am by Charles Owens

BLUEFIELD — Alpha Natural Resources Inc., one of the country's biggest coal producers with active mining operations in Tazewell, McDowell and Buchanan counties, voluntarily filed Monday for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Alpha operates about 50 coal underground and surface mines and more than 20 coal preparation facilities in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Wyoming. In West Virginia, the company currently employs about 4,870 coal miners with another 1,380 working in neighboring Virginia.

"While a difficult decision, this voluntary Chapter 11 filing is the right strategy at the right time for the future of our business," Alpha's Chairman and CEO Kevin Crutchfield said in a company press release. "It will enable us to build on the significant steps we have taken over the past several years to restructure our debt and protect our operations. I am confident Alpha will emerge from this process as a stronger company, with a diversified resource base and better positioned for the future."

The company said it will promptly seek the necessary immediate relief from the bankruptcy court that will allow normal business operations to continue uninterrupted while in Chapter 11, with coal being mined, customer commitments honored, and wages and benefits for Alpha's affiliated employees paid.

Alpha operates a number of coal mines across the region, including the Tiller Deep Mine and the Knox Creek Prep Plant, both in Tazewell County; the Southern Gap and Butcher Knife mines, both in Buchanan County; and the Horse Creek No. 1 Mine, Lower War Eagle Deep Mine, the Rock Branch No. 1 A Mine and the Litwar Prep Plant, all in McDowell County.

All of the local miners employed by Alpha were notified of the bankruptcy filing Monday by human resource representatives at the individual mines, the company said.

Crutchfield said the U.S. coal industry is in an unprecedented period of distress with increased competition from natural gas, an oversupply in the global coal market, historically low prices due to weaker international and domestic economies, and increasing government regulation that has pushed electric utilities to transition away from coal-fired power plants.

“The change and challenges the U.S. coal industry has experienced over the last several years are greater than any in the past three decades,” Crutchfield said. “There is no doubt more uncertainty is ahead, but also transformational opportunity in the coal sector for those who make proactive, strategic decisions.”

Crutchfield said the company has secured an 18-month Debtor-in-Possession financing package totaling up to approximately \$692 million, arranged by Citigroup, and led by a group of both its first and second lien lenders.

Area lawmakers were quick to respond Monday to the announcement of the bankruptcy filing by Alpha Natural Resources.

“Today’s announcement by Alpha Natural Resources is heartbreaking for our miners, their families and the communities in which they live,” Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said. “The bankruptcy filing affects more than just those directly employed by Alpha — it affects suppliers, support services and retailers whose businesses are dependent on these companies and their employees.”

Tomblin said he spoke with Crutchfield Monday, and was pleased to learn that operations will continue while the company restructures. Tomblin said Alpha’s announcement demonstrates the negative impact the federal EPA’s “irresponsible mandates” are having on the state.

“This news is very troubling for West Virginia and the thousands of families who will be impacted,” U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said. “It’s no surprise that Alpha points to federal policies as part of the reason for its bankruptcy filing, especially when the president is just hours away from announcing the most extreme anti-coal regulations to date.”

Capito was referring to the controversial “Clean Power Plan” unveiled Monday by President Barack Obama. The new rules require even steeper emission cuts from coal-fired U.S. power plants than previously expected. Capito, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee’s Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee, said the ARENA act would serve as an alternative to Obama’s plan.

Alpha also launched a website Monday, www.alpharestructuring.com, to provide stakeholders with information about the bankruptcy process and legal filings made with the court.

Alpha, based in Bristol, Va., was founded in 2002 and it went public three years later, the Associated Press reported Monday.

Bluefield Daily Telegraph (WV):

http://www.bdtonline.com/opinion/unprecedented-challenges-a-dark-day-for-coal/article_69417b16-3a2a-11e5-9c1a-ebb8c3afedaf.html

Unprecedented challenges: A dark day for coal

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 4:30 am

In another day of despair for the historic coalfields of southern West Virginia and Southwest Virginia, unfortunate developments on the local, state and national level converged Monday to create an even greater challenge for the embattled industry.

The coal-related headlines — both bad and good — included:

- President Barack Obama — continuing his reprehensible five-year-old war on coal — announces even steeper emission cuts from coal-fired U.S. power plants than previously expected, while also renewing his push for wind and solar energy to replace coal. Under the revised rules announced Monday by Obama, power plants will have to attain an even lower level of carbon dioxide emissions to be in compliance. Obama's proposal from last year set the target as a 30 percent nationwide cut by 2030. The revamped plan calls for a 32 percent cut in the same time period. Never mind the fact that coal is still responsible for 30 percent of our nation's electricity generation. It's also important to remember that there simply aren't enough wind turbines and solar panels out there to keep the lights on in America once we stop mining coal.
- Alpha Natural Resources, a company that still employs 4,870 coal miners in West Virginia and 1,380 in Virginia, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, the fourth big coal producer to file for bankruptcy protection within the last two years. The company said Monday was still a normal day of operation for coal miners employed at Alpha mines in Tazewell, McDowell and Buchanan counties.
- Opponents, including West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, announced plans Monday to sue to stop the rule. Morrisey said the final rule announced Monday blatantly disregards the rule of law and will severely harm West Virginia and the U.S. economy.
- The National Mining Association also asked the EPA Monday to put the rule on hold while the legal challenges play out.

- U.S. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee, announced the markup of the ARENA Act, an alternative to Obama's job-killing "Clean Power Plan." Capito said Monday that the full committee will consider her alternative plan this week.

- U.S. Rep. Evan Jenkins, R-W.Va., called Monday upon Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin to stand with other governors and refuse to file state plans with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and participate in the EPA's "Clean Power Plan" rules. Members of the West Virginia Coal Association also are calling upon Tomblin to do the same. But Tomblin, a Democrat who comes from the coalfields of southern West Virginia, remains inexplicably non-committal to this request. Instead, his spokesman Chris Stadelman tells the Daily Telegraph, "There has been no decision made on how West Virginia will respond to the EPA Clean Power Plan mandate. Gov. Tomblin is committed to doing what is best for the residents of the Mountain State." Well that's a no-brainer. Join the other governors in challenging this administration and the EPA that is responsible for the loss of thousands of West Virginia coal mining jobs.

- West Virginia Senate President Bill Cole, R-Mercer, said Monday that the new Republican majority in Charleston passed HB 2004 in 2014, a measure which requires legislative approval before any plan can be submitted to the federal government to comply with the rules issued Monday by Obama. As Senate President, Cole said he and other lawmakers will utilize the new legislation to protect West Virginia.

- And for those who are wondering where Democratic front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton stands on coal, the picture became a lot clearer Sunday when Clinton proclaimed Obama's clean power rule was a good plan that she would defend as president.

The current challenges facing coal, and the region's historic coalfields, are clearly unprecedented. Yes, coal is facing a myriad of challenges right now that extend beyond Washington, including intense competition from natural gas, an oversupply in the global coal market, and slumping markets for thermal and met coal. But the greatest challenge is coming from crippling government regulations coming out of Washington.

Never before have we seen such an anti-coal administration in Washington. This is a president who promised to bankrupt coal-fired power plants while on the campaign trail, and he is certainly doing everything in his power to live up to that campaign promise. But even more frustrating are those lawmakers — mostly Democrats — who continue to blindly follow this administration's war on coal, helping to kill thousands of jobs in the process.

Can coal still rebound? We hope so. But Monday was certainly not a good day.

West Virginia Gazette-Mail (WV):

<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/article/20150804/GZ04/150809844/1103>

Sally Jewell: America must invest in coal communities

By Sally Jewell – 8/4/15

For generations, America's Coal Country communities have borne the brunt of the environmental and health impacts of surface mining while keeping the nation's power plants humming. In recent years, they also have been hit hard by the rapid energy transformation underway in the United States.

Booming natural gas production, declining costs for renewable energy, increases in energy efficiency, flattening electricity demand, and updated clean air standards are changing the way electricity is generated and used across the country.

While these trends produce cleaner air and healthier communities, generating new jobs and industries, the economic and technological changes also impact workers and communities that have relied on the coal industry as a source of good jobs and economic prosperity, particularly in Appalachia.

The nation has a moral commitment to assist these hardworking and increasingly hard-pressed communities, in addition to our legal commitments to mine workers and their families. And President Obama is determined to help them adapt to the changing energy landscape and build a better future.

His comprehensive POWER Plus Plan, detailed in the 2016 budget request, would use a range of federal resources and programs to invest in worker training and job creation, strengthen the health and retirement security of mine workers and their families, accelerate the clean-up of hazardous abandoned mine lands, and spur the use of carbon capture technology.

The Plan calls for more than \$50 million in new federal economic and workforce development dollars to help communities diversify their economies, create good jobs in existing or new industries, and attract new sources of job-creating investment. The funds would assist workers laid off at coal mines and coal-fired power plants by providing job training and reemployment services, connecting these workers to high-quality, in-demand jobs.

In addition, to address the continuing legacy of abandoned mine lands on the health, safety, environmental and economic development potential of Coal Country communities, the President's Plan makes \$1 billion available over five years from the unappropriated balance of the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Fund. About \$200 million annually would be provided to States and Tribes to help reclaim sites which have hindered economic development in some of these communities.

The funds would be allocated based on historic coal production, which follows the same general framework of how the money would be divided if the reclamation fund were to end and the remaining funds were to be distributed in 2023, as under current law. In addition, the unemployment rate of coal mining regions, the amount of abandoned coal mine land and severity of water problems, and the likelihood that reclaiming these with job-creating economic development strategies would help revitalize impacted communities are criteria which are outlined in the proposal to focus the funds. States and Tribes would also be expected to partner with local stakeholders to plan projects that hold the most promise for future economic development.

There is an estimated \$9 billion dollar backlog of AML sites across the country. The majority of un-reclaimed coal mine lands are concentrated in Appalachian states that have in recent years experienced substantial coal mining job loss.

But we cannot act without Congress. The President's budget has called for Congress to provide the authority to invest these dollars in communities in need today — not eight years from now. The money is there, and companies have paid it for the specific purpose of cleaning up legacy mining sites. I believe by putting this money to work, we can put the hardworking people of Appalachia and other parts of Coal Country back to work building a diversified economy for the future.

There are no silver bullets for solving economic and social problems in Appalachia or other struggling coal regions in the United States. But smart and sustained federal investment in Coal Country has made a difference in people's lives and in the well-being and prosperity of communities. The President's Plan reinvigorates and targets those investments to meet our nation's obligations and express our gratitude to these proud, deserving Americans.

Sally Jewell is the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

-

-

West Virginia MetroNews (WV):

<http://wvmetronews.com/2015/08/04/the-prince-of-tides/>

The Prince of Tides

President Obama made it clear from the beginning that he was going to tackle global warming. One of the most memorable lines from his nomination victory speech in 2008 was when he said his election would be “the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.”

Since his omniscience turned out to be more limited than some may have wanted to believe, the President was reduced to the old fashioned methods of producing public policy and building consensus, skills the one-term U.S. Senator lacked.

His attempts to pass cap-and-trade legislation failed even in a Democratically-controlled Congress, so the President turned to the Environmental Protection Agency to unilaterally produce rules to satisfy the environmentalists, while also building his legacy.

Yesterday was the crowning moment when the administration released the Clean Power Plan, aimed at cutting power plant carbon emissions by 32 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels. The roll-out by the President included predictable hyperbole about the impact of the rules; less pollution (though carbon is a naturally-occurring element), healthier children, job creation, energy bill savings, and most of all, saving the planet.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy even predicted that the new regulations would cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030, but have total benefits of up to \$54 billion. Using that questionable math we should cut out all carbon emissions and triple the benefits!

What we never hear from the administration is that these draconian carbon reductions will stop global warming, and that’s because they won’t. Using the EPA’s own models, reducing carbon emissions by 30 percent (the initial reduction proposed before being adjusted to 32 percent) will slow planetary warming by less than two one-hundredths of a degree by 2100.

The President hopes the rules will demonstrate to the rest of the world that the U.S. is willing to be a leader on global warming. Well, maybe. China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia and other countries with emerging economies continue building coal-fired power plants to supply cheap reliable electricity.

The Clean Power Plan is an economic assault on West Virginia and other coal-producing states, since the new rules will lead to some current coal-fired power plants being shuttered, while making it impossible to build any new ones. Analysts at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. told the Wall Street Journal that coal consumption will drop 23 percent by 2020.

Coincidentally, just hours before Obama’s White House announcement on the carbon rule, Alpha Natural Resources, which employs nearly 5,000 people at 46 mines and prep plants in West Virginia, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. That’s the fourth coal company in recent months go upside down.

Meanwhile, there is a legitimate legal question whether the EPA has the authority to impose the

sweeping rules. States must explain how they will reduce carbon emissions using “building blocks” established by the EPA, meaning the federal government is now going to dictate to states what types of fuels they can use to generate electricity.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrissey is challenging the Clean Power Plan. The case was tossed out of court earlier, but only because the EPA had not yet issued the rules. With those now in place, the case is ripe for review.

America is not an oligarchy, it’s a republic where the people’s representatives debate and decide public policy. The Clean Power Plan is sweeping federal power that creates a monumental shift in the country’s energy economy. It’s almost unfathomable that this can be accomplished through an executive action.

Unless, of course, President Obama believes not only in the abuse of executive power, but also his mastery over the earth and the tides.

-

-

West Virginia Public Broadcasting (WV):

<http://wvpublic.org/post/can-wva-comply-clean-power-plan-researchers-say-yes>

Can W.Va. Comply With the Clean Power Plan? Researchers Say 'Yes'

By GLYNIS BOARD • 14 HOURS AGO – 8/3/15

Just this past June a report was released that projects possible scenarios in West Virginia given the proposed Clean Power Plan. West Virginia Public Broadcasting revisited the authors now that the final rule is passed.

{{Listen Listening...4:39}}

“Until this rule, there were no national limits for carbon pollution, said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy in an online video that announced the Clean Power Plan. She said 4.3 million comments were taken into account between the proposed rule in 2014 and the final rule released this week.

“It will keep energy affordable and reliable. It will steer us toward where the world is going, not

looking back at where it's been," McCarthy said.

In one of his own video releases, President Obama is calling the Clean Power Plan "the biggest, most important step we've ever taken to combat climate change."

"President Obama is looking at his legacy on the issue of climate change," said James Van Nostrand, an associate professor at WVU's College of Law and the director of the Center for Energy and Sustainable Development.

Van Nostrand co-authored a report last month that looks at how West Virginia can comply with the proposed Clean Power Plan - despite the almost unanimous consensus by state leaders that the EPA's rule would spell certain economic death in a state that relies so heavily on coal production and coal-fired power.

"The All-of-the-above approaches that we're suggesting will lead to compliance are still going to lead to compliance under the final rule," said Evan Hansen, the other author of a report that details how West Virginia can comply with the new Clean Power Plan. Hansen and Van Nostrand have been carefully considering the options for several years and conclude that West Virginia will be able to meet the federal goals - but they say it will be a painful process.

"Complying with the final rule is definitely going to require changes in West Virginia," Hansen said. "For one thing, less coal is going to be burned and mined, impacting coal miners and companies, but still $\frac{3}{4}$ of the energy in WV will continue to be coal. So this is not by any means the death-knell for coal."

Hansen also mentioned the Clean Energy Incentive Program within the Clean Power Plan that incentivizes energy efficiency and development of renewable energy in low-income areas saying, "it might soften the blow and diversify the economy."

The Clean Power Plan sets goals for states individually but leaves states to come up with compliance plans. Federal regulators strongly suggest states take advantage of compliance options such as multi-state agreements, and interstate trading of carbon credits. Federal regulators also have compliance models in place to guide states or to impose on states that do not comply by 2022.

West Virginia Record (WV):

<http://wvrecord.com/stories/510631513-west-virginia-leaders-denounce-epa-clean-power-plan>

West Virginia leaders denounce EPA Clean Power Plan

Chris Dickerson Aug. 3, 2015, 10:29pm

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS – West Virginia’s Patrick Morrisey and other state attorneys general on Monday denounced the Obama administration’s finalized “Clean Power Plan.”

“The final rule announced Monday blatantly disregards the rule of law and will severely harm West Virginia and the U.S. economy,” Morrisey said during the AG’s meeting at The Greenbrier resort. “This rule represents the most far-reaching energy regulation in this nation’s history, drawn up by radical bureaucrats and based upon an obscure, rarely used provision of the Clean Air Act.

“We intend to challenge it in court vigorously.”

President Barack Obama and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Monday unveiled the final version of the “Clean Power Plan,” which mandates states to cut their carbon emissions by an average of 32 percent by 2030. This goal would be accomplished through a reduction in coal-based energy generation in the coming years.

Morrisey already had teamed up with a bipartisan coalition of 14 other states to challenge the preliminary version of the rule, which contained serious legal flaws. While the administration made some changes in the final rule, Morrisey and his fellow AGs still believe the final version is “fundamentally flawed and illegal.”

Morrisey and his counterparts have argued for more than a year that the proposed rule is illegal because it is not limited to requiring power plants to install pollution technologies, which is all the Clean Air Act permits. Rather, they say the majority of the rule’s emissions reductions come from mandating that the states fundamentally alter their energy economies to consume less coal-fired energy.

“This final rule adopts a radical, unprecedented regime, transforming EPA from an environmental regulator into a central planning authority for electricity generation,” Morrisey said. “With this final rule, the administration is doubling down on a proposal that would force states to fundamentally reorder their energy economies, which will lead to fewer jobs, higher electricity rates and put stress on the reliability of the power grid.”

Morrisey contends the rule is also illegal because it seeks to require states to regulate coal-fired power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, even though the EPA already regulates those same plants under the hazardous air pollutant program, or Section 112 of the Act. Amendments to the Clean Air Act in 1990 expressly prohibited such double regulation. The administration is relying on a drafting error in a portion of the 1990 amendments to claim it has the authority to follow through with these onerous regulations.

Morrisey and the coalition of AGs said Monday they intend to file legal actions challenging this

final rule.

“Our coalition, in short order, will comprise of many states, consumers, mine workers, coal operators, utilities and businesses who are united in opposition to this radical and illegal policy,” Morrissey said.

Other West Virginia officials issued similar complaints about the EPA rule.

"After an initial review, it appears the Environmental Protection Agency has made some changes to the proposed Clean Power Plan rule; however, those limited changes still leave us with proposed regulations that are unreasonable, unrealistic and ultimately unattainable for our state," Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said in a statement. "While those who employ our hardworking miners have urged us to refuse to submit a compliance plan, at this point West Virginia still has not determined whether it will submit any plan to the EPA.

"As required by House Bill 2004 passed by the Legislature this year, our Department of Environmental Protection will develop a detailed report for the Legislature that includes 'a comprehensive analysis of the effect of the Section 111(d) rule on the state.' In accordance with the new law this analysis, which could not begin until the EPA released its final rule, will be completed within 180 days."

Tomblin said that while the DEP works on the report required by the Legislature, his staff will continue to review our legal options and are working to determine what a federally developed state implementation plan would involve.

"I appreciate the ongoing work of DEP Secretary Randy Huffman and his staff, who like me, are committed to putting the interests of West Virginians first," he said.

State Senate President Bill Cole and House Speaker of the House Tim Armstead issued a joint pledge to defend the state's coal industry.

"The release of President Obama's Clean Power Plan today is sadly something that we have anticipated for years," Cole said. "That's why we took bold, decisive steps in passing House Bill 2004, which provides an additional layer of protection against the relentless attacks on West Virginia's coal fields.

"The Legislature absolutely will not approve any State Implementation Plan that will cause more harm, and bring more job losses, to our state's coal industry."

Armstead echoed that commitment.

"The Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan is another blow to hard working West Virginians who rely on coal-fired power plants for their jobs and livelihood," he said. "President Obama, when he was running for president, pledged that if companies continued to rely on coal-fired energy it would bankrupt them. This plan is the latest step in the Obama administration's pledge to bankrupt the coal industry.

"Sadly, on the very day that the Obama administration released another round of over-reaching regulations that will further harm our vital coal industry, one of West Virginia's leading coal producers announced that it had filed for bankruptcy protection.

"Under the EPA's new plan, West Virginia, along with other energy producing states, is directed to develop a plan that will impose self-inflicted damage on our state's struggling economy," Armstead continued. "All leaders of our state will need to carefully consider whether West Virginia should submit a State Implementation Plan as required by the Clean Power Plan or instead take other steps to fight this latest round of federal overreach."

West Virginia MetroNews (WV):

<http://wvmetronews.com/2015/08/03/tomblin-manchin-both-criticize-clean-power-ruling/>

Tomblin, Manchin both criticize clean power ruling

By MetroNews Staff in News | August 03, 2015 at 9:34PM

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin and Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin both condemned the EPA's final Clean Power Plan after it was released Monday.

"After an initial review, it appears the Environmental Protection Agency has made some changes to the proposed Clean Power Plan rule; however, those limited changes still leave us with proposed regulations that are unreasonable, unrealistic and ultimately unattainable for our state," Tomblin said as part of a statement.

Tomblin continued to say that West Virginia hasn't determined if it will submit a plan to the EPA.

Manchin also released a statement against the ruling, discussing the devastating impact it would have on coal.

"This Administration's demonization of coal has already devastated the coal mining industry in West Virginia and in energy-producing states across the country," Manchin said. "Because of unattainable and unreasonable regulations, thousands of coal miners have been laid off in West Virginia alone, and more than 26 coal companies have filed for bankruptcy."

Manchin also said that President Obama and his administration "think our country can do without coal, and they are dead wrong."

WOWK TV Channel 13:

<http://www.wowktv.com/story/29700130/wv-counties-react-to-obamas-clean-power-plan>

WV counties react to Obama's Clean Power Plan

Posted: Aug 03, 2015 8:19 PM EDT | Updated: Aug 03, 2015 8:35 PM | EDTBy Christina Fan, ReporterCONNECT

BOONE COUNTY, WV -

President Obama released his controversial Clean Power Plan Monday afternoon, aiming to cut down carbon emissions in the US by nearly a third within 15 years. Many consider it the most ambitious plan in trying to tackle climate change, but it's one that West Virginia counties said will have devastating impact for decades.

"It's heart wrenching to all of us in this county because it affects so many people," said Daphne Elvis, whose husband works for Alpha Natural Resources.

Thoughts of the deteriorating coal industry still draw emotion from many people. In Madison, WV the once bustling streets are replaced with eerie silence. Many like Elvis say they are afraid how much more the new regulations will devastate the town.

"It's a hard job, not to mention it's a dangerous job," she said. "They go into these mines everyday risking their lives for their families."

Now, many more are at risk of losing their jobs. The Boone County Commission learned this morning at least three more mines were shutting down. In the past four years, coal severance tax in the county dropped more than 50 percent.

"We didn't have any idea that it was going to get as bad as it has," said Mickey Brown, a Boone County commissioner. "There are only two to three coal mines in this county even working now and we were the top coal producing county in West Virginia."

The Clean Power Plan isn't just going to hit big coal producing counties. Places with more economic diversity like Kanawha County say they expect to be hit too.

"Everybody is directly tied to the coal industry," said Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper. "If you've got someone who sells gasoline or flowers or works in the restaurant, you are tied."

Already many counties have had to cut down on public safety. Other projects like fairs, festivals, and public transportation are also at risk.

"Southern West Virginia has been decimated by this and a lot of folks don't seem to care."

But as the regulations get tougher local leaders say more people will be forced to care whether or not they work in the coal mines.

WDTV News Channel 5 (WV):

<http://www.wdtv.com/wdtv.cfm?func=view§ion=5-News&item=How-Does-Clean-Power-Plan-Affect-Our-Economy-24802>

How Does Clean Power Plan Affect Our Economy?

Written by Matthew Baumgarten | Last updated on August 03, 2015 @ 8:33PM | Created on August 03, 2015 @ 8:02PM

President Obama has officially released all the details on his Clean Power Plan, that would significantly increase emission restrictions on power plants across the nation.

Economic experts and representatives from power companies like First Energy agree that because we are so early in the implementation process, it's unknown how this will effect our economy specifically, but it is possible this could be the final nail in the coffin for several energy companies who were already struggling.

"When coal is down, jobs are down," says Michael McCawley, Interim Chair for the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences at WVU. "Layoffs are almost inevitable in the coal industry when the economy sags or when the demand for coal decreases. So that's to be expected."

The newly released plan will supposedly cut greenhouse gas emission from US power plants by almost a third in 15 years. Power stations are the largest source of greenhouse gasses in the U.S. But, those in the coal industry say solving global warming at the hands of coal workers is wrong.

The UMWA said in a statement released by President Cecil E. Roberts:

"It's hard to draw any other conclusion than this: The people who will suffer the most from this rule are working and retired coal miners and their families, primarily in Appalachia."

Officials say the impact on our area of the state mostly depends on how much export demand of coal decreases.

"So much of West Virginia coal is exported to other states in the country for power production, that that is really going to be the key outcome over the long term outcome for West Virginia coal demand," says Brian Lego, Bureau of Business and Economic Research's Economic Forecaster at WVU.

Janet McCabe, Acting Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation with the EPA, says the final Clean Power Plan was sculpted from public comment, and is the best plan to go forward.

"We believe the rule is better and more implementable, more achievable, more affordable, and will deliver more public health protection and climate protection to Americans as a result."

5 News was also able to talk to some of you out there to get your take on the new plan.

"Our families, especially West Virginia, depend on the money from the coal. So, I mean, it's gonna be a bad thing either way," says David Bartholow, a Marion County resident

"It's obviously our economy and workers here, and that's unfortunate," adds Lewis County resident Tom Huber. "Hopefully, the EPA will take some that into account and the government will come up with some policies to try and help displaced workers."

WSAZ News Channel 3:

<http://www.wsaz.com/home/headlines/Renewable-Energy-Increasing-As-Government-Unveils-Plan-to-Cut-Coal-Emissions--320533072.html>

Renewable Energy Increasing As Government Unveils Plan to Cut Coal Emissions

Posted: Mon 7:40 PM, Aug 03, 2015 By: Nathan Takitch

In West Virginia, energy officials say limiting coal energy will increase the need for cleaner sources of power.

CHARLESTON, W.Va (WSAZ) -- In the wake of President Obama's "Clean Power Plan", which aims to cut carbon dioxide emissions 32 percent by 2030, an increased number of neighbors across the region might need to get their energy from a source other than coal.

In West Virginia, energy officials say limiting coal energy will increase the need for cleaner sources of power.

While officials from the West Virginia Division of Energy did admit cutting one-third of carbon dioxide emissions in 15 years will be challenging, West Virginia appears to be on the right track.

A report from the White House says generation of renewable sources of energy, like wind, hydro, and solar energy, are at an all-time high -- four times higher than in 2008.

Jeff Herholdt, director of the West Virginia Division of Energy, says hydro plants have a long history as the state's source for clean energy.

"The hydro certainly was our earliest opportunity," Herholdt said. "We have, probably, twenty some dams in West Virginia that generate electricity."

Other clean energies are on the rise, as well.

West Virginia currently has five wind farms in the northern part of the state, with two more on the way.

The state can also generate two megawatts of solar energy at any time.

Energy officials say in a state where coal is still so dominant, continued growth in clean energy is crucial for growth in job creation.

"They're important to West Virginia because they bring in additional jobopportunities," Herholdt said.

The State Journal (WV):

<http://www.statejournal.com/story/29696842/obama-administration-unveils-finalized-carbon-cutting-clean-power-plan-industry-fights-back>

Obama Administration unveils finalized carbon-cutting Clean Power Plan; industry, WV fight back

Posted: Aug 03, 2015 2:00 PM EDT

Updated: Aug 03, 2015 3:06 PM EDT

By Sarah Tincher, Energy ReporterCONNECT

The Obama Administration has unveiled the finalized version of its proposed Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants.

After more than a year since it was proposed in June 2014, the rule, released Aug. 3, sets standards to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

The federal rule allows states to design and implement their own individual compliance plans, which would then be enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

If the rule withstands the legal challenges its anticipated to face, state plans are due in September of 2016. But states that need more time can make an initial submission and request extensions of up to two years for final plan submission.

Additionally, the compliance period begins in 2022 instead of 2020, as the original proposal had set, and emission reductions are phased in on a gradual “glide path” to 2030.

Under the Clean Power Plan, the administration expects renewable energy sources will account for 28 percent of the nation’s electric generating capacity, up from 22 percent in the proposed rule.

“Due to these improvements, the Clean Power Plan will save the average American nearly \$85 on their energy bill in 2030, and save consumers a total of \$155 billion through 2020-2030, reducing enough energy to power 30 million homes,” the Clean Power Plan fact sheet stated.

However, unsurprisingly, several coal industry representatives have threatened legal action against the plan.

Just hours before the finalized rule was released, Murray Energy Corp. announced plans to proceed with five lawsuits challenging the rule, calling it “flagrantly unlawful.”

“The proposed two-year delay in the implementation of EPA’s anticipated carbon regulations is irrelevant,” Robert Murray, chairman, president and CEO of Murray Energy, said in a statement. “American families and businesses will still bear the brunt of huge electricity cost increases and less power system reliability.

“What the proposed two-year delay does assure is an extremely destructive and costly ‘balloon

payment' in 2022," Murray added.

"Our citizens on fixed incomes will not be able to pay their electric bills, and our manufacturers of products for the global marketplace will not be able to compete," Murray said. "We have no choice but to challenge the Obama Administration's illegal actions in Court, and we will prevail."

Additionally, several state lawmakers in many states, including West Virginia, have firmly stood against the plan since it was originally proposed; including some who have asked the state not to implement a compliance plan at all.

"After an initial review, it appears the Environmental Protection Agency has made some changes to the proposed Clean Power Plan rule; however, those limited changes still leave us with proposed regulations that are unreasonable, unrealistic and ultimately unattainable for our state," WV Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said. "While those who employ our hardworking miners have urged us to refuse to submit a compliance plan, at this point West Virginia still has not determined whether it will submit any plan to the EPA."

"As required by House Bill 2004 passed by the Legislature this year, our Department of Environmental Protection will develop a detailed report for the Legislature that includes 'a comprehensive analysis of the effect of the Section 111(d) rule on the state,'" he said. "In accordance with the new law this analysis, which could not begin until the EPA released its final rule, will be completed within 180 days.

"While the DEP works on the report required by the Legislature, we continue to review our legal options and are working to determine what a federally developed state implementation plan would involve," Tomblin added.

Senate President Bill Cole, R-Mercer, and Speaker of the House Tim Armstead, R-Kanawha, also released a joint statement following the announcement pledging to defend West Virginia's coal industry.

"The release of President Obama's Clean Power Plan today is sadly something that we have anticipated for years," Cole said. "That's why we took bold, decisive steps in passing House Bill 2004, which provides an additional layer of protection against the relentless attacks on West Virginia's coal fields.

"The Legislature absolutely will not approve any State Implementation Plan that will cause more harm, and bring more job losses, to our state's coal industry."

Similarly, Armstead said, "All leaders of our state will need to carefully consider whether West Virginia should submit a State Implementation Plan as required by the Clean Power Plan or instead take other steps to fight this latest round of federal overreach."

But the EPA also released a proposed federal plan that could be implemented in states that don't create plans that meet Clean Power Plan standards, which some analysts have said would be

more costly for states to follow.

However, West Virginia has already reduced its power sector carbon pollution by 19 percent since 2008, the fact sheet stated; and mayors in four West Virginia cities have joined the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, committing to take action in their communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“West Virginia, like all states, will have flexibility to meet EPA’s goal by using the energy sources that work best for them and by cutting energy waste,” the document stated.

West Virginia Gazette-Mail (WV):

<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/article/20150803/GZ01/150809879/1419>

Obama urges coalfield officials to support climate action

by Ken Ward Jr., Staff writer – 8/3/15

As coal industry officials and their political allies launched furious opposition to a federal effort to fight climate change, President Obama on Monday urged coalfield communities to support the plan, offering to work with local leaders to address coal’s legacy liabilities and provide new economic opportunities where the mining industry’s decline is being felt the most.

In a White House speech, Obama criticized those who have been campaigning against and planning lawsuits over his administration’s “Clean Power Plan” before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had even finalized details of its series of rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

“They will claim this is a ‘war on coal’ to scare up votes, even as they ignore my plan to actually invest in revitalizing coal country and supporting health care and retirement for coal miners and their families and retraining those workers for better paying jobs and healthier jobs,” Obama said.

“Communities across America have been losing coal jobs for decades,” the president said. “I want to work with Congress to help them, not to use them as a political football. Partisan press releases aren’t going to help those families.”

Just minutes after Obama finished his speech, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, a Democrat, issued a

statement that said “limited changes” from a draft made public a year ago still leave the plan “unreasonable, unrealistic and unattainable for our state.”

The United Mine Workers union likewise issued a statement shortly after the president’s remarks that accused Obama and the EPA of trying to solve climate change on the backs of coal miners who have already “given their health, their limbs and far too often their lives to create the foundation of the America we live in today.”

“The draft rule the EPA proposed last year put a terrible burden on coal miners and their communities, especially those in Appalachia,” said UMW President Cecil Roberts. “From all accounts that have been published so far, the final rule is even worse.”

Obama’s remarks and the reactions to the EPA plan came as all sides began poring over hundreds of pages of agency documents made public Monday after administration officials spent several days dribbling out details about the climate change plan to the media, in preparation for the White House speech and the eventual publication of the rules in the Federal Register, the technical action that kicks off the ability of industry and coal-state opponents to challenge the Clean Power Plan in court.

West Virginia’s top coal producer, Murray Energy, issued a statement saying that the company would file five different lawsuits against EPA for what it called an “illegal power grab” and predicting it would win.

State Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, a Republican, also issued a statement to repeat his promise to sue over the EPA plan.

While the final EPA rules give states two more years to come up with plans to comply and move back actual reduction deadlines for utilities, West Virginia Coal Association President Bill Raney said the public should not be fooled by those concessions to the EPA plan’s critics.

“Yes, the final regulation tacks on a couple of years to the compliance timeline, but all this accomplishes is to perpetuate uncertainty and provide more time for the rule to do more damage — irreversible damage — to the nation’s energy industry and electric grid,” Raney said.

Overall, the EPA’s final rule would reduce power sector carbon dioxide emissions 32 percent by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.

Climate scientists say that significant reductions in greenhouse gases are needed to try to stop the worst impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels and more devastating storms and droughts. While Obama’s proposals alone may not head off such effects, the administration hopes they will help the U.S. push other countries to likewise take bolder action on the issue.

“The Clean Power Plan provides us with our best shot to meet our international climate goals and lead the rest of the world towards a strong international climate agreement,” said Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists. “This will also be a catalyst for a clean energy economy at home that will benefit all states through a more diverse energy supply,

cleaner air and home-grown job growth.”

In West Virginia, early reviews from the state regulators and independent experts suggested that the final EPA rule mandates more dramatic emissions reductions for the state than those in the proposed rule released in June 2014. The changes, while still being examined and compared to the earlier draft, could make it “much more challenging” for the state, said James Van Nostrand, a law professor and director of the West Virginia University College of Law’s Center for Energy and Sustainable Development.

Van Nostrand has worked with the Morgantown-based consulting firm Downstream Strategies on two reports that outlined ways West Virginia could comply with the EPA’s draft rule.

Kelley Gillenwater, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said that agency officials “are still analyzing the full rule and the calculations used.”

Under a state law passed earlier this year, the DEP has 180 days from publication of the final EPA rule to analyze its potential effects and whether submission of a state plan to comply is “feasible.” Any DEP plan must be submitted for legislative review.

“Because the final rule has changed significantly from what the EPA first proposed, it will take some time to determine the full scope of these effects,” Gillenwater said. Tomblin said that he has not yet made a decision on requests from the mining industry that West Virginia refuse to submit any sort of compliance plan to EPA.

In his White House speech, Obama made rare public reference to a companion proposal that the administration calls the “Power Plus Plan,” which is actually a series of initiatives that would help financially troubled pension and health care plans for union miners, start spending much more money on abandoned mine reclamation projects that create jobs, and provide seed money to help local citizens and groups do more work toward diversifying coalfield economies.

West Virginia’s congressional delegation has said little about this Obama plan, and when pressed for comment on it most gave it a cool reception.

“Coal is running out of customers and we need to adapt our economy to one that produces more clean energy that customers want,” said Ted Boettner, director of the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy, which has advocated increased attention to economic diversification efforts.

“A crucial aspect of ensuring that the Clean Power plan works for West Virginia will be the ability of our congressional delegation to push strongly for investments to help coal communities diversify their economies and protect the pensions and benefits of coal miners.”

-

West Virginia MetroNews (WV):

Lights getting dim for coal

By Jeff Jenkins in News | August 03, 2015 at 1:47PM

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The bankruptcy filing Monday by Alpha Natural Resources seemed to follow the template that other companies have in recent months, a Wall Street Journal reporter said.

“Companies filing for bankruptcy, reducing their debt loads, trying to clean up some of the legacy of labor and other types of costs and coming out in smaller fashion, particularly in Appalachia,” reporter Matt Jarzemsky said during an appearance on MetroNews ‘Talkline’.

Alpha secured millions of dollars to give it some time to finalize its reorganization plan under Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

“A lot of the bankruptcy plan has yet to be worked out,” Jarzemsky said. “The company doesn’t have solid plans for asset sales at this point or how it will deal with labor or other interests.”

Some of Alpha’s operations are union and United Mine Workers of America International President Cecil Roberts warned the company Monday not to take benefits away from workers and retirees.

“Today’s Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing by Alpha Natural Resources appears to follow the same script as others we’ve seen this year: pay off the big banks and other Wall Street investors at the expense of workers, retirees and their communities,” Roberts said in a statement. “Alpha needs to understand that while we are willing to discuss ways forward that will be of mutual benefit for the company and for our members, we are also prepared to do whatever we need to do to maintain decent jobs with the pension and health care benefits our retirees were promised and have earned.”

Alpha has closed more than 80 mining operations and cut 6,500 jobs since 2011 but it hasn’t been enough. The soft overseas market for metallurgical coal and federal EPA regulations continue to hurt, Jarzemsky said.

The Alpha development came just hours before President Barack Obama announced the finalization of the Clean Power Plan which has the goal of reduced emissions from coal-fired power plants by more than 30 percent over the next 15 years.

In a video released by the White House Sunday, Obama described what some have called the

cornerstone of his climate change fight.

“Until now, there have been no federal limits to the amount of that pollution those plants can dump into the air. Think about that,” Obama said.

White House talking points said 69 million metric tons of carbon pollution was emitted from power plants in West Virginia in 2013, which is equal to the yearly population of 14 million cars. Approximately nine percent of the state’s adult and children population suffer from asthma, the federal Centers for Disease Control said.

“The sooner we act, by taking responsible steps to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants, the more we can do to prevent impacts that affect all Americans – especially the most vulnerable,” the White House said.

U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito predicted the Clean Power Plan would shut down the remainder of the coal industry.

“We have Patriot bankrupted, Jim Walter bankruptcy, Alpha bankrupted, thousands of people lost jobs,” Capito said Monday on ‘Talkline’.

Comments from federal EPA administrator Gina McCarthy criticizing opponents of the Clean Power Plan rankled Capito Monday.

“Come to our communities and don’t tell me these are ‘old tired arguments from special interests.’ These are real families,” Capito said.

WCHS TV ABC Channel 8 (WV):

<http://www.wchstv.com/news/features/eyewitness-news/stories/State-Attorneys-General-Band-Together-To-Fight-Obama-Clean-Power-Bill-180003.shtml#.VcEO2fVhHw>

State Attorneys General Band Together To Fight Obama Clean Power Bill

Updated: Monday, August 3, 2015 | Stefano DiPietrantonio

President Obama’s proposed “Clean Power Bill” is going to meet a lot of legal challenges, starting with Attorneys General from 14 states so far.

West Virginia's Attorney General Patrick Morrisey met with other Attorneys General from across the U.S. in White Sulphur Springs Monday, calling the President's new rule illegal and vowing to fight it in court.

"Attempts absolutely must be stopped!," said Morrisey speaking to reporters at The Greenbrier Monday.

Several state's Attorneys General are condemning the Obama administration's finalized "Clean Power Plan."

"It goes far beyond what Congress has authorized," said Greg Zoeller, who is Indiana's Attorney General.

"He's trying to bankrupt coal and he's been succeeding," said Morrisey.

On the White House's official site, this message from the President: "The biggest, most important step we've ever taken to combat climate change."

"They're moving forward on the basis of their policy actions, but what they're doing is blatantly illegal," said Morrisey, who added, the rule represents the most far-reaching energy regulation in this nation's history, drawn-up by radical bureaucrats and based upon an obscure, rarely used provision of the Clean Air Act.

Indiana's Attorney General agreed.

"This is really the states asking the Judiciary to look and see, whether the EPA has again exceeded its authority under what Congress allows," said Zoeller.

"First blush, the rules are more Draconian than what was proposed," said Chris Hamilton, who is Senior Vice President with the West Virginia Coal Association. "And there's just no question about the devastating effects it's going to have on coal producing states."

Especially states like West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky, which still rely heavily on coal to fuel their industrial and home power needs. West Virginia alone said Hamilton, has lost 18 coal-fired power units, 400 more across the country.

Coal is our number one export abroad and to states all along the eastern U.S..

"The President has elected to not go to Congress and try to do this the right way. They're trying a lot of legal mumbo jumbo and doing end-runs around the Constitution," said Morrisey. "We're not going to let that happen. I think we have an excellent chance of prevailing in court."

NATIONAL

US News and World Report:

<http://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2015/08/03/obama-power-plant-rules-spark-2016-fight-over-climate-change>

Obama's sweeping new power plant rules spark 2016 campaign fight over climate change

08-03-2015 05:07 PM EDT |By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent)

President Barack Obama speaks about his Clean Power Plan, Monday, Aug. 3, 2015, in the East Room at the White House in Washington. The president is mandating even steeper greenhouse gas cuts from U.S. power plants than previously expected, while granting states more time and broader options to comply. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

0WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's sweeping new power plant regulations are thrusting the divisive debate over climate change into the race for the White House, with candidates in both parties seeing an opportunity to capitalize.

To Democrats, rallying around global climate change is a way to energize liberal supporters and paint Republicans as out of touch with the majority of Americans. To the GOP, Obama's executive actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions are burdensome to business and block job creation, an argument targeting Americans' worries about the economy.

The president unveiled the plan at the White House Monday, calling it the "single most important step" the U.S. has taken to combat a major global threat.

Broad support for the rules by Democratic candidates and universal opposition from Republicans puts the parties' eventual nominees on a general-election collision course. Most of the changes Obama outlined would have to be implemented by the next president, if the rules survive court challenges.

Republicans gave little indication of what they would do differently to curb emissions from U.S. power plants, if anything at all. They cast the measure requiring states to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030 as unnecessary and costly White House overreach that will raise energy costs for Americans.

The Obama administration itself estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030, though the actual price won't be clear until states decide how they would reach their targets.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, said the regulations would be an economic "buzz

saw" that would "cost hard-working Americans jobs and raise their energy rates." Jeb Bush, the former GOP governor of Florida, said the rules "run over state governments, will throw countless people out of work and increases everyone's energy prices."

Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz questioned whether climate change is really occurring.

"I'm saying the data and facts don't support it," Cruz said at a retreat sponsored by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, heavily courted donors who strongly oppose Obama's climate change agenda.

The issue has also fueled the fundraising race for Democrats. Billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer dropped \$74 million into the 2014 midterm elections for candidates who support policies to curb climate change. Despite such spending, Democrats gave up control of the Senate, lost seats in the House and suffered embarrassing defeats in gubernatorial races.

Steyer hosted a fundraiser earlier this year for Hillary Rodham Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. Clinton called Obama's power plant measure a "significant step forward" and said she would defend it if elected president. Her Democratic challengers were similarly supportive.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. Obama has already used executive actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions from other major sources, including cars and trucks.

Building on Obama's aggressive actions, Democrats have cast climate change as one in a long list of issues — along with gay marriage, immigration and diplomatic relations with Cuba — where Republicans are out of step with the majority of Americans. A Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted in March showed 59 percent of Americans said they'd like the next president to be someone who favors government action to address climate change, while 31 percent would prefer someone who opposes it.

Dan Pfeiffer, a longtime Obama adviser, said climate change is also a "litmus test" for many of the young voters who backed the president in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Some Democrats fear Clinton, if she wins the nomination, will struggle to replicate the high turnout among young people and minorities that helped propel Obama into the White House.

"They see candidates who deny the science as relics from the past not worthy of their support," said Pfeiffer, who left the White House earlier this year. "Motivating the younger voters that were core to the Obama coalition will be one of the biggest tasks for the Democrats in 2016 and climate change is one the best issues to get them to the polls."

According to the Washington Post/ABC News poll, 64 percent of adults between ages 18-39 said they'd prefer the next president to favor action to address climate change, compared with 49 percent of those over 65. However, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs and Yale University poll late last year found that younger Americans didn't hold significantly

different views from older Americans on government regulation of carbon dioxide emissions.

PBS News Hour:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/will-new-clean-power-regulations-stand-challenges/>

Will New Clean Power Regulations Stand Up To Challenges?

August 3, 2015 - 5:45pm

GWEN IFILL: The president has made his climate change plans a major part of his second-term, legacy-making agenda. Today, he laid out new details about a key component of his strategy: regulating power plant emissions.

But within moments of his speech, opponents within some industries and in many states were resisting the stricter standards.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: Today, after working with states and cities and power companies, the EPA is setting the first ever nationwide standards to end the limitless dumping of carbon pollution from power plants.

(APPLAUSE)

GWEN IFILL: With that, the president formally announced an even tougher clean power plan than expected.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: So, the idea of setting standards and cutting carbon pollution is not new. It's not radical. What is new is that starting today, Washington is starting to catch up with the vision of the rest of the country.

GWEN IFILL: The rule, to be implemented by the EPA, means power plants must cut carbon dioxide emissions 32 percent by 2030. That's from 2005 levels. Such a reduction would be up from a 30 percent cut in the original draft. The revised rule also calls for generating 28 percent of U.S. power from renewable energy, up from 22 percent.

At the same time, it gives states extra time to begin reducing emissions. Industry groups and a number of states pushed back today, saying the rule will cost jobs and cause spikes in energy prices. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, representing the coal state of Kentucky, promised to block the plan.

SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY), Majority Leader: It represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion. And in Kentucky, these regulations will likely mean fewer jobs, shuttered power plants, higher electricity costs for families and businesses. So, I'm not going to sit by while the White House takes aim at the lifeblood of our state's economy.

GWEN IFILL: Republican presidential candidates, including Jeb Bush, also rejected the EPA plan.

JEB BUSH, Republican Presidential Candidate: It's typical of the Obama administration, taking executive power he doesn't have. And I believe it's unconstitutional, and I think in a relatively short period of time, the courts will determine that as well.

GWEN IFILL: Democrats, including White House hopeful Hillary Clinton, generally support the plan. In a statement, she called it "a significant step forward in meeting the urgent threat of climate change." And she added: "It's a good plan. And, as president, I would defend it."

Before the day was out, a major coal mining firm, Murray Energy Corporation, filed what's expected to be the first of many suits over the rule.

For a closer look at the new rules, and how the administration plans to defend them, we turn first to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. I spoke with her a short time ago.

Administrator McCarthy, welcome.

GINA MCCARTHY, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency: Thank you, Gwen.

GWEN IFILL: The president said today this announcement, this plan is part of a longer, bigger, more sweeping global climate plan.

But just talking about the U.S. portion of it, for some people, that sounds like their worst nightmare, that it's part of a bigger plan. And for some people, they say this is just the beginning. Why is it not too much overreaching?

GINA MCCARTHY: Well, I think you know, Gwen, we did tremendous outreach on this plan, and this clean power plan is really the biggest step forward we're taking to combat climate change, but also to protect our kids' future and the planet.

It sets the first ever carbon pollution standards for our power sector, because they're the biggest generator of carbon pollution. And it's also going to make sure that we drive down other traditional air pollutants.

But what we learned during that comment period was how we could do this smarter and smarter, how we could make it legally solid, how we can actually do this in a way that will keep our energy reliable and affordable, provide billions of dollars in benefits over the course of this rule. And it actually, in the end, will mean lower energy bills for families.

So we think we hit the mark here. We did a lot of outreach. We think we did it right. And we know that states and utilities are going to be able to work with us to get their plans in and get the reductions that we really need to protect public health and get that big action you need globally.

GWEN IFILL: I want to circle back to you on several of the points you just made, but, first of all, you mentioned how many comments there were. There were four million public comments.

GINA MCCARTHY: Yes.

GWEN IFILL: And yet this president could promulgate this rule and the next president could never implement it.

GINA MCCARTHY: Actually, it doesn't quite work that way under the Clean Air Act. Congress gave the president the authority and EPA the responsibility to move forward with rules like this.

But it actually isn't that easy to undo. It has a solid legal foundation, a strong record, and it will stay in place. And we're confident that because of all the work we did with the states that we are going to see them respond. We didn't just take comments. We listened to it. We made changes. They will see that.

And I think everybody across the U.S. is beginning to realize that the worst thing we can do is the take no action on climate change.

GWEN IFILL: The president said today if we don't do it, nobody will, speaking of the world, the global impact here.

We know China has taken some steps, but how do you know that the U.S. making this step will have any effect on other nations?

GINA MCCARTHY: Well, the one thing we know for sure is if the U.S. doesn't act and we don't lead, then we will not get action.

So, we already saw when we put the proposal out that we had countries coming in, likely really whether the U.S. was finally going to provide the leadership that we always provide. And what the president recognized is that we could make a big leap forward. It would be good for us domestically. It will help grow the economy and jobs.

These industries that we're supporting here are actually the industries where growth is happening, like solar and wind. So we are not taking away the benefits. We're actually adding benefits to the American public.

But, immediately, there was response by other world economies and the largest to be able to meet and see how they could join. They know that the winner in this market globally that actually takes action on climate will have tremendous opportunities to actually have the technologies and the services that the rest of the world will want to see.

So this isn't about a problem. This is about turning a problem into a tremendous economic opportunity for the U.S. domestically and internationally. Other countries will want to be part of that action.

GWEN IFILL: Domestically, is it also part of your intention to let the utilities ultimately take the lead on this, rather than government?

GINA MCCARTHY: Well, I think what happens in this particular part of the Clean Air Act is that we set a standard, the states do their plans.

But we know that the states are sensitive to the needs of their utilities, and the utilities are going to have a part at the table. But this has broader stakeholder engagement that we started. And when they develop the plans, we expect states to have a robust table, because we don't want them to just reduce pollution. We want them to do it in a way that benefits their economy and in a way that keeps their lights on and keeps it affordable.

They all can do it, every state. This is legally solid. This is sticking around. We think states will take it seriously, as will utilities.

GWEN IFILL: You keep mentioning affordability.

If I'm a regular consumer of coal-fired electricity, I would be a little nervous about the fact that what you're proposing is actually going to cost in the short and the long term a little bit more.

GINA MCCARTHY: Well, we can show you how this works, but, in the interim between proposal and final, we got great comments.

And we are turning this into real opportunities for trading across states. We know that, as a result of this rule, every single fuel will have a place at the table. Will there be as much coal as there used to be? No, there won't, because we're not driving coal up, we're driving carbon pollution down. But they will still be part of the energy mix, as will natural gas. That's still as valuable as it has been before.

And we are going to drive more renewables into the market because frankly the market is actually rewarding renewables now. We see tremendous growth. And we're following that wave. My job is to reduce carbon pollution, not dictate the energy mix. And you will see everybody has a place at the table in 2030, just like they do today.

GWEN IFILL: Well, and, finally, how can you be so confident that this will withstand legal scrutiny? It's already in the courts.

GINA MCCARTHY: Well, one of the values of having all these comments is, I think everybody and their brother already told us what they thought was legally vulnerable.

But we spent a lot of time talking to people. We have looked at this. We are very confident that it

is legally solid. We did listen to comments. If people had a question about legal authority or whether we were technically correct, we have resolved those issues during that period.

And we are confident that this is going to stand the test of time, but even more confident that people in this country are sick and tired of being worried about climate change and they want leadership. This president has provided that leadership. And now it's time to embrace it and to act together.

GWEN IFILL: EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, thank you very much.

GINA MCCARTHY: Thank you, Gwen.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Picking up on that last point, more than 20 states, mostly led by Republicans, are expected soon to file suit against the new rules.

West Virginia is among those leading the group. The state is part of the heart of coal country and it still ranks coal among its largest employers, even as the number of jobs dwindle.

Patrick Morrissey is the state's attorney general, and I spoke with him this afternoon.

Welcome, Mr. Attorney General. We appreciate your joining us.

The president says these tougher environmental standards are necessary not just to protect the next generation, but this one. How do you see them?

PATRICK MORRISSEY, West Virginia Attorney General: Well, I think everyone supports policies that would promote clean air and clean water.

But when you put something forth of this magnitude, it has to be legal, and this administration has probably gone further than any we have ever seen in terms of pushing forth a radical, illegal proposal, which we don't think ultimately will withstand scrutiny in the court.

We really have to make sure that you do this the right way. And they're taking the Clean Air Act and EPA, which are environmental regulators, and they're turning them into central energy planners. That's not allowed under the statute and the Constitution, which is why we plan to challenge it.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Well, all the reporting we have been reading this morning says that the administration has gone the extra mile in the last month or two to try to make sure that these new rules do comply with the law.

PATRICK MORRISEY: Right. I think you are going to hear a lot of arguments about some of the changes they have made, but there are a couple unassailable facts.

First, the Clean Air Act really prohibits double regulation of coal-fired power plants. They're already doing that in one context, which means they can't come back and do it in another. The second part which is really critical is that the EPA and the Clean Air Act, they're designed to regulate the coal-fired power plants. They can't force or try to incentivize states in order to put forth other forms of energy and to force states to no longer manage their energy portfolios.

This is a real problem. They're on very thin legal ice. And I think that the statute is very clear. The federal government has a role to regulate power plants. The states typically manage their energy portfolios.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Well, let me ask you about some of the substance of this. As of two years ago, it's my understanding that power plants around the country were responsible for 30 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions. That being the case, shouldn't they be targeted for significant cuts?

PATRICK MORRISEY: Well, I think any time you talk about whether there is a policy goal to target a particular power plant, that's a debate that is really best left to Congress.

I think that if Congress got together and decided what they wanted to regulate, they may be perfectly appropriate. That's not what's happened here. Right now, you have unelected bureaucrats that are reaching out to some really radical legal interpretations in order to have a sweeping transformation of the American economy.

I think the American people deserve better than to just have a few bureaucrats try to come up with a creative new legal mechanism in order to do so much fundamental change. Let's have a real debate in Congress. Keep in mind, this has not been done through congressional action. This is done through the EPA.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Well, let me — again, let me ask you about some of the substance here, Mr. Attorney General.

You talked about it being drawn up, in your words, by radical bureaucrats. But, again, in looking at it, we know that it was — according to this plan, states can work in conjunction with others, in compliance, and, second of all, we know that power plant emissions have already dropped more than 15 percent over the last 10 years, which is, what, half of where they would have to be by — under this plan.

So, you're already more than halfway there. Is this really as radical as what you're saying?

PATRICK MORRISEY: I think it is for a number of reasons.

First of all, I know, in my home state of West Virginia, there are so many jobs that have been lost. And, in addition, we're starting to see electricity prices go — and that's — go up. That's common sense because if you retire coal-fired power plants before baseline and build other non-coal-fired power plants, consumers, rate payers are going to have to pay the difference.

But the other real problem with this is that, even if you agree with the policy goals of this president, what they're trying to do legally by taking the EPA, which has historically regulated environmental regulation and coal-fired power plants, and now they are innovating the state space.

States traditionally manage their own energy portfolios. That's not what's happening here because the targets are so severe, it's going to be difficult for anyone to meet it. And the EPA lacks that authority in the first place.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Are you saying though that if these same rules had been promulgated by Congress, that they would be acceptable to you and the state of West Virginia?

PATRICK MORRISEY: No, I'm not saying that.

What I'm saying is that, at a minimum, the American public deserves to have a robust debate and have Congress engage in this back and forth, as opposed to EPA, when it really lacks legal authority to do so. The American public insists that public officials adhere to the rule of law, and when you start going off and using really unprecedented legal arguments in order to justify your proposal, I think you start to lose some people.

But let's have a debate in Congress.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Well, didn't — just quickly to interrupt here at the end, didn't the Supreme Court, though, say that the EPA does have the authority to issue these kind of regulations?

PATRICK MORRISEY: Well, in 2007, there was a case, Massachusetts v. EPA, where the Supreme Court arguably said that there is some availability with respect to carbon dioxide.

However, you have to point to a specific provision in the statute. You can't just make it up. And what the administration has done here is not tethered to the statute. So, we think what they're doing here is clearly illegal. It's not appropriately tied back in to that Supreme Court decision.

And that's why I think we feel good about our legal arguments and we have a growing coalition of states on a bipartisan basis, along with miners, and consumers, businesses, who know just how significant this rule is and how damaging it would be to our country.

JUDY WOODRUFF: Patrick Morrissey, attorney general for the state of West Virginia, we thank you.

PATRICK MORRISSEY: Thank you very much.

From: Abrams, Dan

Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 1:12 PM

To: Abrams, Dan; Allen, Laura; Andreasen, Julia; Blanchard, Daniel; Bond, Brian; Bremer, Kristen; Bressler, Lindsey; Colaizzi, Jennifer C.; Cox, Taylor; Daguiard, Robert; Davis, Alison; Davis, Jay; Dennis, Allison; Enobakhare, Rosemary; Goffman, Joseph; Gong, Kristiene; Harrison, Melissa; Hart, Daniel; Hull, George; Jones, Enesta; Kowalski, Kennedy; Lee, Monica; Lehman, Rachel; Ludwigsen, Emily; McCabe, Janet; Milbourn, Cathy; Millett, John; Noonan, Jenny; Orquina, Jessica; Ortiz, Julia; Purchia, Liz; Ragland, Micah; Reynolds, Thomas; Risley, David; Smith, Roxanne; StClair, Christie; Sutton, Amanda; Valentine, Julia; Wilson, Erika

Subject: CPP News Clips: State by State 8/3 & 8/4

KENTUCKY

Glasgow Daily Times Online (KY):

http://www.glasgowdailytimes.com/news/ky-leaders-challenge-epa-s-obama-s-new-stiffer-carbon/article_cba23e00-3a5f-11e5-a3cd-0b1e47517b5a.html

Ky. leaders challenge EPA's, Obama's new stiffer carbon emission regs

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 3:30 am | By RONNIE ELLIS / CNHI News Service

FRANKFORT – Kentucky's political figures decried the long-awaited carbon emission regulations announced Monday by President Barack Obama.

No one was more forceful or defiant than Sen. Mitch McConnell, the majority leader of the United States Senate.

"I will not sit by while the White House takes aim at the lifeblood of our state's economy," McConnell said. "I'm going to keep doing everything I can to fight them."

He said the proposed regulations would cost jobs, hurt the middle class and increase electrical rates.

The regulations are even stiffer than previously expected, seeking a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions from power plants by 2030. That's 2 percent more than originally advertised. (The 32 percent goal is for the entire country; goals for individual states vary depending on their energy mix and needs. Kentucky's original goal was 18 percent, but it wasn't immediately clear Monday afternoon how much that might increase under the announced proposal.)

Most critics find small consolation in a two-year extension that the Environmental Protection Agency is allowing states to develop their own carbon reduction plans. The federal government will implement plans for states that do not submit their own.

Kentucky's Energy and Environment Cabinet has been working on a plan to meet the 18 percent goal, but cabinet secretary Len Peters had suggested he would prefer more time to meet it.

However, both gubernatorial candidates – Republican Matt Bevin and Democrat Jack Conway – have said they will not submit a plan to the EPA if elected.

Conway, who wants to avoid the fate of Democrats like Ben Chandler and Alison Lundergan Grimes, who lost elections to Republicans campaigning on "Obama's war on coal," has worked hard to be seen as an ally of coal. Conway sued the EPA trying to halt development of the new carbon regulations, but the courts threw the case out, saying they could not rule on a proposed but unimplemented rule. Conway promised to sue again when the final regulations were announced.

He wasted no time Monday criticizing them.

"I sued to stop this rule when it was first proposed," Conway said. "Now that it has come out in its final form, I will continue to fight this Kentucky job-killing rule. I will be joining a bipartisan

group of attorneys general asking the EPA and the federal court to stay implementation of this rule while it's challenged in court.”

Gov. Steve Beshear said he is “extremely disappointed and frustrated” by the EPA action, calling it “disastrous” for Kentucky, its coal industry and manufacturing base.

But he said the state has few alternatives to submitting a plan to meet the goals without “harmful impact to rate payers, manufacturers and the state economy. While he plans to fight the rule, Beshear said he will continue “to explore ways for Kentucky to comply with the rule should it become law because we believe that a Kentucky-specific plan would be better than a federal plan imposed on us.”

In making the announcement Monday, Obama said climate change is already affecting life on the only planet we have and that it would be “shameful” if the United States delayed action any longer. EPA administrator Gina McCarthy said she is confident U.S. action will spur other countries to act to reduce greenhouse gases from carbon emissions as well.

The EPA estimates reductions in carbon emissions will prevent as many as 3,600 premature deaths, result in 90,000 fewer asthma attacks in children and actually reduce utility costs as renewable energy sources are developed by 2030. But most utility analysts scoff at the estimated utility savings.

Bill Bissett, president of the Kentucky Coal Association, said the regulations would not stand up to the legal challenges they're certain to face and will burden ratepayers with increasing electrical costs and less reliability.

Mike Duncan, the president of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity who is from Kentucky and a political ally of McConnell's, said the regulations show Obama's “lack of empathy for hard-working Americans.”

There was support from some quarters. The United States Conference of Mayors, The Sierra Club and Appalachian Voices praised the new regulations as did Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.

Dana Beasley Brown, KFTC chairwoman, said Kentucky can meet the goals in the regulations through modest increases in renewable energy sources – if Kentucky's political leaders “will step up to the challenge and seize this opportunity.”

The proposed regulations face years of court battles before full implementation.

Lexington Herald-Leader Online (KY):

McConnell readies counterattack to EPA plan

BY JOSH LEDERMAN | McClatchy Washington Bureau | August 4, 2015 Updated 3 hours ago

WASHINGTON — Your move, Mitch McConnell.

The just-released Clean Power Plan from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is a far-reaching attempt to cut the amount of carbon pollution pumped into the atmosphere, all in a bid to help curtail climate change. It's part of President Barack Obama's legacy-building climate change agenda, designed to make the United States an international leader in addressing the issue in advance of major talks set for Paris at the end of the year.

"Climate change is not a problem for another generation," the president says in a video the White House released this week to detail the plan's environmental and health benefits. "Not anymore."

The plan's formal release comes with what the administration said would be an "all-out climate push" by the White House, with the president scheduled to hit the road to sell his vision for attacking climate change.

And while he's on the road, McConnell — the Senate majority leader, a Republican from coal-rich Kentucky — will be doing whatever he can to undermine it.

McConnell laid out his case in a statement Monday on the Senate floor, saying the rule would hurt workers and possibly even the environment, as energy production is outsourced to nations with poor environmental records.

"It represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion," McConnell said. "And in Kentucky, these regulations would likely mean fewer jobs, shuttered power plants, and higher electricity costs for families and businesses. I will not sit by while the White House takes aim at the lifeblood of our state's economy. I'm going to keep doing everything I can to fight them."

Even before the White House and the EPA came out with their plan, McConnell has been laying the groundwork for a major challenge. First elected to the Senate in 1984, McConnell became Senate majority leader when Republicans took over the body this year — and in that role, McConnell is in a key position to oversee the interests of his party's agenda as well as the needs of his coal-country constituents.

He joined a Senate Appropriations subcommittee this year specifically so he could oversee the EPA's budget — and the influence that agency has over his state.

The Clean Power Plan was announced in draft form in June 2014 and finalized this week. It's

designed to shift power production from carbon-heavy sources such as coal to cleaner ones. That shift already is underway in many states, while others have — or will — struggle to do so.

It gives individual states carbon-reduction targets and lets them work alone or with neighbors to modify their mix of coal, natural gas and renewables such as wind to achieve those targets. The plan seeks to cut power-sector carbon pollution by 32 percent from 2005 levels.

"Just say no" is one of the strategies McConnell is using to try to derail the Clean Power Plan.

In a March letter to governors across the nation, McConnell said that he had "serious legal and policy concerns" about the plan and that "it is the EPA that is failing to comply with the law here."

In the three-page letter, McConnell reviewed a list of reasons for what he said was the plan's questionable legal underpinnings and urged states to "carefully review the consequences before signing up for this deeply misguided plan."

Rather than submitting state-specific plans now, he said, states should allow the courts to rule on the merits of the overall Clean Power Plan.

That the plan will be challenged in court is a given. But Ann Weeks, senior counsel and legal director for the Clean Air Task Force, said it's clear the president has the authority to do what he's doing on the power plan. One recent U.S. Supreme Court case that challenged aspects of a separate EPA clean-air rule still let that basic rule stand.

"It's quite clear there will be challenges to what they do," Weeks said. "But that's always the case. Everything the EPA does is challenged in court. Everything. Always. But is there legal authority to regulate power plants to control carbon dioxide emissions? Yes. I think that's very clear."

Whatever becomes of the legal push-back, McConnell and others in Congress are employing another strategy to try and derail the power plan: tacking what are known as "riders" onto other pieces of legislation, seeking to force the administration's hand.

In a recent appropriations bill, McConnell inserted language that prohibits the administration from retaliating against states that don't submit a state implementation plan under the Clean Power Plan, thus effectively neutralizing it.

What the rider strategy is setting up is a game of climate change chicken, one in which Republicans in Congress are trying to make Obama back down from what is a key part of his legacy.

It's certain Obama would veto any spending bill with riders attached that kill the climate change plan, said Norman Ornstein, a centrist scholar on politics and Congress at the American

Enterprise Institute.

Chattanooga Times Free Press Online (TN):

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/opinion/freepress/story/2015/aug/04/consequences-put-powclepower-plan/318012/>

Consequences put the 'pow' in the Clean Power Plan

August 4th, 2015 in Opinion Free Press

If you liked what Obamacare did to your health insurance costs, you'll love what the president's new energy rules will do for your electricity costs.

A year after unveiling a plan that would put in place greenhouse gas limits on existing power plants, President Barack Obama announced his administration's go-ahead with the idea Monday.

It can be expected to, at a minimum, kill manufacturing and energy jobs when power plants close and raise electric rates as much as 7 percent.

The Clean Power Plan may raise electricity prices in the short run, Environmental Protection Agency Gina McCarthy admitted in June, but she said ultimately they'd drop because of the changes. Officially, American families would save a whopping \$85 a year in 2030, the administration boasted Monday.

Remember how your health care costs dropped because of the Affordable Health Care Act? We don't, either.

McCarthy also denied the plan would hurt the economy or cost jobs. But if fossil fuel plants close or have to cut production because of the limits on states, jobs and the economy naturally would be affected. That was just outright dissembling on McCarthy's part.

The electricity rate rises will hit the poor — the same portion of the population that has suffered the most under Obama's economic plan during the last six-plus years — the hardest, too.

But never mind, said McCarthy. The public benefit often outweighs any costs that might have to be paid.

If those consequences weren't bad enough, a University of Minnesota associate professor of bioproducts and biosystems engineering told a United States House subcommittee last week that the administration's continuing push of corn grain ethanol use in the production of gasolines (though not in their burning) "is responsible for reduced air quality over much of the U.S., which

leads to increased mortality."

The final Clean Power Plan released Monday imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits on states than were announced a year ago. Instead of states being forced to cut their limits 30 percent, compared to 2005 levels, by 2030, they'll have to pare them back by 32 percent.

But, again as with Obamacare, the devil may be in the details that aren't revealed initially.

"In many cases," Dan Kish, senior vice president for policy at the Institute of Energy Research, told The Washington Times, "they won't find out until they're ramped up. The only law that ever seems to constantly get passed in Washington is the law of unintended consequences. It isn't until all of these things go into place that you can watch what's going to happen. You can't put layer on layer on layer. Eventually, the camel's back breaks."

One of those rules involving the ozone standard is so onerous, Jay Timmons, the president and chief executive officer of the National Manufacturers Association, said in a statement, that even places with no industrial activity for miles around can be considered noncompliant.

"This regulation and the president's climate regulatory action plan are not the answer," a statement from the National Association of Manufacturers said. We will keep all options on the table, including litigation, to protect manufacturers' ability to compete in the global marketplace."

Indeed, lawsuits are expected to be filed immediately over the new rules, which EPA has admitted may drop coal's share of U.S. power generation by a quarter if the plan is fully implemented. Coal, after all, is the industry candidate Obama vowed to kill in 2007. Meanwhile, some energy-related organizations are calling for delays, and several state governors have talked of not complying.

The final draft of the new rules pushes back from 2020 to 2022 the year in which individual states will have to begin cutting their admissions toward a federal government-imposed goal, but that is not likely to make the changes any more popular.

However, the rules are a gift to Republican presidential candidates, who as a president would be able to dismantle, slow or continue Obama's policies after Jan. 20, 2017, or charge that another Democrat would continue the president's plan or conceive of one even more devastating to the economy.

The country's energy policy always should be to seek cleaner and more efficient ways of producing energy, including with fossil fuels, but not to punish and penalize those already in use. As greener energies become less expensive to use without government subsidies — and administration officials could not boast of solar or wind being so in the fact sheet they released Monday — they naturally should be included in a total energy plan.

But until they are, they should be used only where they are cost-efficient, and this plan should die the death it deserves either in a court or at the hands of the next president.

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga Times Free Press (TN):

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2015/aug/04/obamcalls-carbcuts-power-plantstvonce-meet-ne/318038/>

Obama calls for carbon cuts by U.S. power plants

August 4th, 2015 by Staff and Wire Reports in Business Around the Region

WASHINGTON -- Calling it a moral obligation, President Barack Obama unveiled the final version of his plan to dramatically cut emissions from U.S. power plants, as he warned anew that climate change will threaten future generations if left unchecked.

Touting the plan at a White House event on Monday, Obama said the unprecedented carbon dioxide limits are the "the single most important step" America has ever taken to fight climate change. He warned that because the problem is so large, if the world doesn't get it right quickly, it may become impossible to reverse, leaving populations unable to adapt.

"There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change," Obama said.

The carbon controls outlined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency mandate even steeper greenhouse gas cuts from U.S. power plants than previously expected. But the new rules give the Tennessee Valley Authority a big advantage over the draft proposal issued a year ago.

Under the new rules, TVA will be able to count the new Unit 2 reactor it is building at the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant near Spring City, Tenn., as part of its carbon reductions. Previously, the EPA had said TVA couldn't count the new unit since it was started back in the 1970s, long before the new rules were ever developed.

TVA estimates it has already cut its carbon emissions by 30 percent since 2005 by closing old coal-fired power plants and replacing that power with more natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar and hydroelectric generation. Under its long-term power plan known as the Integrated Resource Plan, TVA expects to make further cuts in carbon emissions by closing its Widows Creek, Colbert, Johnsonville and Allen steam plants and by cutting operations at Paradise Fossil Plant prior to 2022 when the carbon reductions must be made.

"We believe that TVA's 2015 integrated resource plan sets us up well for the future," TVA spokesman Scott Brooks said Monday. "Its flexibility allows us to meet new regulations and changing market conditions with decreasing carbon dioxide emissions."

Brooks said TVA is still reviewing more than 1,000 pages of regulations issued by EPA Monday in the final version of the Clean Power Plan. But those who worked on the a new power plan for TVA's future expect the federal utility to have little difficulty meeting the new standards, depending upon how the seven states that TVA serves implement the new rules.

"TVA is well positioned and is some ways ahead of many utilities in limiting its carbon emissions and preparing for these changes," said Stephen Smith, executive director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and a member of TVA's advisory board that reviewed the utility's new Integrated Resource Plan. "We would hope that some of the incentives in this plan for those that move early with measures for more energy efficiency and renewables will help push TVA to move quicker on some of these initiatives. But there is certainly no evidence that this will cause any great job loss or economic disruption in Tennessee."

Although coal jobs will continue to shrink, Smith said clean energy jobs from solar, wind and energy efficiency will continue to increase. Environmental Entrepreneurs, or E2, estimates that Tennessee added 2,600 jobs last year by employers operating in the energy-efficiency, renewable-energy, clean-transportation, and greenhouse-gas management and accounting sectors.

But one of TVA's former chairman, Mike Duncan, insists that the new carbon controls will cost thousands of U.S. jobs and hurt manufacturing by driving up the cost of energy.

"With the release of the final carbon regulation, the President once again demonstrated his lack of empathy for hard working Americans across the country who first and foremost wish to secure a robust economic future," said Duncan, who is now president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. "Even in the face of damning analyses and scathing opposition from across the country, EPA's final carbon rule reveals what we've said for months this agency is pursuing an illegal plan that will drive up electricity costs and put people out of work."

The Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, which represents TVA distributors that serve more than 1 million Tennesseans, said the Clean Power Plan "fails to consider the impact to electric rates and reliability."

"We are disappointed that the EPA continues to ignore the burden these regulations will have on Tennessee families and businesses," said David Callis, general manager of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association.

National Association of Manufacturers President and CEO Jay Timmons said the regulations "will be exceptionally difficult for manufacturers to meet and will increase energy prices and

threaten electric reliability." U.S. Chamber of Commerce CEO Thomas J. Donohue said the EPA rules "will inflict significant damage to our entire economy and reduce our nation's global competitiveness without any significant reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions."

Opponents immediately announced they would sue the government to stop the rules from taking effect. West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, speaking at a summit of Republican state attorneys general, said West Virginia would be among a group of states "launching an aggressive legal campaign."

"Their legal foundation is very, very shaky," Morrisey said of the Obama administration. "We are confident that we will prevail."

Many Republican-led states have said their states simply won't comply. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has encouraged GOP governors to take that step, vowed to use legislation to thwart the president's plan.

The pollution controls form the core of Obama's ambitious and controversial plan to drastically reduce overall U.S. emissions, as he works to secure a legacy on fighting global warming. Yet it will be up to Obama's successor to implement his plan, which has attracted strong opposition from the field of Republican presidential candidates.

The Obama administration estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030. The actual price won't be clear until states decide how they'll reach their targets. But energy industry advocates said the revision makes Obama's mandate even more burdensome, costly and difficult to achieve.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. Already Obama has curbed greenhouse gas emissions from other major sources, including cars and trucks.

The final version of Obama's plan imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected: a 32 percent cut by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama's proposed version last year called only for a 30 percent cut.

EPA estimates that the Clean Power Plan will prevent up to 3,600 premature deaths and 90,000 asthma attacks in 2030, as well as prevent 300,000 missed days of work and school.

Knoxville News Sentinel Online (TN):

http://www.knoxnews.com/news/politiknox/new-pollution-control-rules-draw-praise-criticism_25616212

New pollution control rules draw praise, criticism

Michael Collins | 5:51 PM, Aug 3, 2015 | 6:24 PM, Aug 3, 2015

WASHINGTON — Environmental groups hailed President Barack Obama's plan to impose tough new limits on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants as a huge step toward fighting climate change, but the energy industry and other critics warned the regulations would lead to more expensive electricity.

The Tennessee Sierra Club said the tougher-than-expected restrictions announced Monday on existing power plants will cut carbon pollution that fuels extreme weather events like the severe flooding in Nashville in 2010 and threatens the beauty and abundant diversity of plant and animal species in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

"The Clean Power Plan is a huge opportunity for Tennessee," said Jonathan Levenshus, the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign representative in Knoxville. "Because it gives states reasonable carbon pollution reduction goals and the flexibility to achieve them, we can craft a plan that works for Tennessee and ensures our economy thrives for decades to come."

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, an environmental watchdog group, called the plan a "landmark public health regulation" and said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had gone out of its way to give states multiple pathways toward compliance.

"We support EPA's approach to reining in carbon pollution and applaud EPA for recognizing both the economic and health benefits of increasing clean energy generation resources as a primary carbon reduction measure," said Stephen Smith, the group's executive director.

The new regulations — final, tougher rules than the EPA first announced last year — require the nation's existing power plants to cut emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. The draft version released last year called for only a 30 percent cut.

States will be assigned individual emissions targets that they will have to meet by 2022, but will be given flexibility to achieve those goals by using a mix of energy sources, such as wind, solar or natural gas. States are to submit their compliance plans next year, but those that need more time can request extensions through 2018.

Tennessee already has reduced its carbon pollution by 35 percent since 2008, according to a fact sheet provided by the White House. Still, 38 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted in 2013 from power plants in Tennessee — equal to the yearly pollution from more than 8 million cars.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, the nation's largest public utility, said it still is reviewing the more than 1,000 pages of the new regulations and that it will take weeks to fully understand them.

Nevertheless, the utility said it believes it is poised to meet the requirements. TVA already has

cut its carbon emissions by 30 percent from a 2005 baseline, "so we're already on our way," spokesman Scott Brooks said.

"This will take several years to finalize, so specific impacts will remain uncertain for some time," Brooks said of the new rules.

Jo Ann Emerson, chief executive officer of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, said in a statement that the new rule exceeds the EPA's legal authority under the Clean Air Act and will raise electricity rates for our country's most vulnerable populations.

"The fallout from the EPA's rule will cascade across the nation for years to come," she said.

U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Maryville, who chairs an Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, is still reviewing the new rules, his office said.

U.S. Rep. John J. Duncan Jr., R-Knoxville, said that while everyone wants to improve the environment, "environmental overkill" has sent millions of jobs to other countries in the last 40 to 50 years.

"We must not allow big government environmental regulators to cause our country to move so far to left that it destroys our economy and hurts poorer and lower income Americans in the process," Duncan said.

Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero countered that "clean energy jobs are some of the fastest-growing in Tennessee — nearly triple the state's overall employment growth."

Knoxville has already committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by the year 2020, and Rogero said she's glad to see the federal government "taking a similar bold approach" to cutting pollution and protecting health.

"There's opportunity in the Clean Power Plan to further accelerate job creation in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries," said Rogero, who served on a presidential task force that recommended ways the Obama administration can help local communities deal with the effects of climate change.

"These are the energy jobs of the future," she said.

NORTH CAROLINA

News & Record Greensboro (NC):

http://www.greensboro.com/news/north-carolina-power-plants-well-positioned-for-new-epa-rule/article_c0700eb9-dba7-569a-8bf5-30ed0df17cd9.html

North Carolina power plants well positioned for new EPA rule

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 12:00 am | By Taft Wireback taft.wireback@greensboro.com

North Carolina already has made strides in meeting requirements of the federal government's newly minted Clean Power Plan, which calls for steep cuts in carbon emissions from power plants.

The plan, unveiled in final form Monday, aims to slow climate change by cutting the number of poorly filtered, coal-fired power plants and other industrial sources of carbon dioxide that have a "greenhouse effect" in warming the planet.

The plan, assembled after months of review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to slash nationwide carbon emissions by just under one-third of 2005 levels during the next 15 years.

But it gives each state an individual target. According to a chart on EPA's website Monday, North Carolina would face additional emission cuts of as little as 10 percent or by as much as 36 percent, depending on how state officials choose to address the problem.

"North Carolina is very well positioned to meet the requirements," said Gudrun Thompson, a senior lawyer for the Southern Environmental Law Center in Chapel Hill. "North Carolina can get most of the way without taking additional actions beyond commitments already made and requirements already in state law."

What does the end of the "big coal" era mean to Duke Energy, the environment and Triad ratepayers?

But Gov. Pat McCrory reacted strongly against the new regulations Monday, saying in a news release that they will "increase power bills for North Carolina consumers and threaten job creation while doing little to improve the state's air quality."

"Not only will these new federal rules raise electricity rates, they have the potential to jeopardize the success we've made in making North Carolina's air the cleanest it's been since we began tracking air quality back in the 1970s."

The Republican governor, a former Duke Energy executive, noted that North Carolina is on target for a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030, a reduction he said occurred without "federal intrusion."

The administration plans to challenge the new rule in court, according to the news release.

North Carolina's progress against carbon emissions stems partly from action taken more than a decade ago by the General Assembly under Democrat leadership, which approved the Clean Smokestacks Act that pushed Duke Energy and other utilities to reduce their reliance on coal by closing older units, installing new pollution controls on the coal-fired plants that remained and switching elsewhere to cleaner burning fuels such as natural gas.

Five years later, the Democrat-led General Assembly adopted rules that pushed Duke and other utilities to generate increasing amounts of their Tar Heel electricity from such clean and renewable sources as solar and wind power — another strategy the new EPA rules embrace.

Before and after its 2012 merger with Progress Energy, Duke Energy scrapped a total of 26 coal-fired units at seven Duke and former Progress plants, in addition to spending about \$3 billion to equip its remaining coal plants with scrubbers and other updated controls that reduce airborne pollutants.

The GOP now holds sway in both the state House and Senate, but the two bodies reacted differently in recent months to the impending EPA rules. The House passed a measure calling for the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources to meet with other stakeholders after the new rules' release to decide how to respond.

But the Senate took a conflicting approach that instructed state officials to take no action until the EPA rules emerged from a series of expected court challenges.

The two sides apparently are trying to work out their differences in Raleigh.

Duke CEO and president Lynn Good reacted to the new rules Monday without rancor, noting that they try "to build on the substantial progress Duke Energy and other utilities have made to reduce our environmental footprint."

She pledged to work with officials in North Carolina and other states to keep moving toward "a lower carbon future."

By Duke Energy's calculations, its efforts already have triggered a drop of roughly 25 percent from 2005 levels in both North Carolina and South Carolina.

In unveiling its rules for power plant operation, the EPA credited power plants in North Carolina alone for a drop of 24 percent in carbon pollution since 2008, from roughly 75 million tons to about 57 million tons.

The Gainesville Sun (NC):

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20150803/APN/308039722>

EPA smokestack rules unwelcome, unneeded say leaders in NC

Published: Monday, August 3, 2015 at 9:44 p.m.

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Stricter carbon dioxide limits on North Carolina power plants are less demanding than other states, and the state started cutting smokestack pollution more than a decade ago, yet lawmakers are gearing up to fight the Obama administration.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Monday the mandate for North Carolina is moderate compared to other states.

In part that's because the nation's largest electric company was forced to change after a 2002 state law required cleaning coal-burning power plants beyond what federal rules required. Charlotte-based Duke Energy says it's shuttered 40 older coal-burning units in the Carolinas and Midwest since 2011 as cheaper natural gas has become available.

The state Senate plans to vote Tuesday on prohibiting state agencies from implementing the rules until court challenges are resolved.

The News & Observer (NC):

<http://www.newsobserver.com/incoming/article29903968.html>

Combating climate change may be next Obamacare

BY MARK DRAJEM AND ANGELA GREILING KEANE Bloomberg News – 8/3/15

President Barack Obama has unveiled a landmark set of regulations to combat climate change in a plan that requires states to cut emissions from power plants, setting up a red-state, blue-state battle reminiscent of Obamacare.

“No challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than a changing climate,” Obama said at a White House ceremony Monday. “We’re the first generation to feel the effects of climate change, and the last generation that can do something about it.”

The new rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency to set emission standards for each state drew fire from opponents even before they were announced. States such as Wyoming and Oklahoma have sued to try to block the rule, and as details of the final regulation emerged on Monday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups said they would try to block it in the courts, too.

Just as states challenged requirements under the Affordable Care Act, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell urged them to reject the power-plant regulations. Many are likely to be joined

by coal producers and coal-reliant utilities in challenging the new rules.

“We will pursue all available options, including litigation if necessary, to block EPA’s regulatory power grab,” Tom Donohue, the president of the Chamber, which also led the opposition to Obamacare, said in a statement.

Suit dismissed

Resistance to the proposed rules resembles the prolonged legal fight against Obama’s Affordable Care Act. In June, a federal court dismissed a lawsuit by the nation’s largest coal companies and 14 coal-producing states – most led by Republican governors – seeking to block the EPA’s 2014 proposal to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from power plants.

That June 9 ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said it was premature for a court to act on a rule that had been introduced only in draft form. Other court challenges are expected.

McConnell, a Republican from the coal state of Kentucky, took the unusual step in March of advising governors to block implementation of the rules in their states.

On the Senate floor Monday, McConnell said the EPA’s plan “represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion.”

The administration will proceed even if it means court challenges, White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Monday, saying he’s “not aware of any specific plan” to delay them while court cases play out.

Because of the way the Clean Air Act is written, the rule requires each state to come up with a plan to reduce emissions from power plants.

“Over the next few years each state will have the chance to put together their plans to cut carbon pollution,” Obama said. “And we’ll reward the states that take action sooner rather than later.”

Obama’s EPA plan requires states and utilities to use less coal and more wind power, solar or natural gas. The plan is designed to bring about cuts in carbon emissions from power plants of 32 percent by 2030.

Anticipating the resistance from states, the agency unveiled a series of enticements in its final rule Monday that will make it easier for states that submit plans to cut emissions, and make it cheaper for utilities in those states. The agency will give a bonus for renewable projects started after a state plan is submitted, and clears the way for carbon trading, which many companies say is the cheapest way to comply.

‘Relatively painless’

“It makes it easier for the rank-and-file officials to say that this is doable,” said Vicki Arroyo, the head of the Georgetown Climate Center. “It will be relatively painless.”

Power generation, specifically burning coal to make electricity, is the biggest source of carbon pollution in the U.S. Until now there was no cap on those emissions.

The EPA plan is the centerpiece of Obama’s climate plan, which aims to get the country on track to cut its greenhouse gas emissions 26 percent to 28 percent by 2025 and ink a global accord to get other nations to address global warming, too.

The regulations are to take effect after publication in the Federal Register, but they may be stalled if opponents ask for a stay while challenging in court.

The general EPA plan actually uses a complicated formula to set individual targets for states. Each state must then submit plans to the agency by 2018 on how it will achieve the EPA-mandated goal, which begin to bite in 2022 and phase in through 2030.

It’s that step that may prove problematic, just as many states refused to set up the insurance exchanges under Obamacare.

Obama referenced the parallel between the two plans at the White House on Monday, saying that critics charging the EPA plan will harm minority communities by raising their electric bills are misguided, and if they are serious about helping those communities they should extend health care.

“You could also expand Medicaid in your states,” Obama said in a message to the Republican governors.

The legal argument against the EPA plan, which is likely to find its way to the Supreme Court, centers on whether EPA can rely on emissions reductions from using less coal or natural gas and more renewables as a “best system of emissions reductions.” In previous rules, those systems were seen as equipment that could be installed on smokestacks.

Legal experts say the administration made a number of changes that will shore up its chances of surviving in court.

“It’s much more legally defensible,” said Jody Freeman, a professor of law at Harvard University who supports the EPA’s rule. “What EPA did in the final rule is really bolstering its case for why it has this authority.”

For states refusing to submit plans, it would be up to the EPA to come up with a plan to force power producers to reduce emissions.

Still, utilities such as Entergy Corp., PPL Corp. and FirstEnergy Corp. have been among the utilities opposing a wave of bills in state capitols that would let legislatures block plans to curb emissions. Those companies say they want the flexibility at the state level to figure out the best and cheapest way to reduce carbon emissions.

And the EPA will include an off-the-shelf carbon trading program, something that would make it much easier for states to come up with plans to comply, analysts say.

“We expect modest carbon prices to become a reality as states gradually come around to the efficiency of pricing carbon in power prices as a way to reduce the risk over time,” Julien Dumoulin-Smith, an analyst at UBS AG, said in a research note.

And, even in cases where state leaders refuse to play ball, the EPA has come out with a federal implementation plan that will apply to power producers there. Those plans might be more difficult and costly to implement, just as the online market for health insurance under Obamacare had massive glitches at first.

Just as with the health care law, the success of this rule may be determined by Obama’s successor. Democrat Hillary Clinton supports the plan, but the Republican field trashed it.

“The rule runs over state governments, will throw countless people out of work, and increases everyone’s energy prices,” Jeb Bush said in a statement Sunday. “Climate change will not be solved by grabbing power from states or slowly hollowing out our economy.”

N.C. IMPACT

Under the EPA’s plan, North Carolina will have to reduce its CO2 emissions from power plants by 36 percent.

That translates to reducing carbon dioxide emissions from 1,780 pounds per megawatt hour in 2012 to 1,136 pounds in 2030.

North Carolina’s goals are average for the Southeast in terms of percentage. Alabama is required to reduce CO2 emissions by 33 percent, Kentucky by 41 percent.

Republican Gov. Pat McCrory issued a statement condemning EPA’s plan and vowing “a legal challenge to the final rule.” That likely means North Carolina will join with other states that file a lawsuit to get the EPA’s strategy declared illegal.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources has said the EPA's CO2 strategy will not withstand a legal challenge and has asked the state legislature to pass a bill authorizing DENR not to follow the EPA's mandate.

McCrory's statement warned that the EPA's strategy will raise power bills and threaten job creation "while doing little to improve the state's air quality."

The News & Observer (NC):

<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/article29897686.html>

N.C. to fight Obama climate change plan that cuts carbon emissions

BY BRUCE HENDERSON 8/3/15

The Obama administration on Monday issued the first limits on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants in a major climate change initiative that North Carolina might try to ignore.

The Environmental Protection Agency's rule would lower U.S. carbon emissions 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Reductions would have to start in 2022.

Environmentalists hailed the move as historic climate action as Republicans predicted it will kill jobs and raise electric rates. Lawsuits over it are expected to land before the Supreme Court.

The rule alters the proposal announced last year, increasing the initial reduction goal of 30 percent but giving states two years longer to start complying.

It also sets lower targets for North Carolina: a 36 percent reduction in emission rates compared with the 40 percent proposed last year. The plan also lets the fourth-largest solar state count renewable energy toward the goal.

But resistance to the plan is hardening in Raleigh. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources says the EPA misinterpreted the federal Clean Air Act. The state will file a legal challenge.

"Not only will these new federal rules raise electricity rates," Gov. Pat McCrory said in a statement, "they have the potential to jeopardize the success we've made in making North Carolina's air the cleanest it's been since we began tracking air quality back in the 1970s."

McCrory said the state is already on track to cut carbon emissions 30 percent by 2030 without federal intrusion.

States are supposed to file compliance plans by September 2016, although they can get two-year

extensions. A federal plan will serve as a backstop for states that don't craft their own plans.

The North Carolina Senate will take up a measure Tuesday that prohibits the state from filing a compliance plan until legal challenges are resolved.

"One thing the legislation could do is to take away the choices for how North Carolina can devise a cost-effective plan from DENR and put it with the EPA," said Jonas Monast of Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions.

The state's renewable-energy standard, which made North Carolina a major solar player, is also under attack by Republican legislation to freeze it at current targets. A freeze that slows growth of the industry would make it harder for the state to reach the EPA's target, Monast said.

DENR has argued that the best legal, and potentially least expensive, strategy is to focus on emissions solely from power plants.

That could backfire, former DENR official Robin Smith says, potentially making it harder for the state to comply and raising costs for utilities and customers.

"A state with significant advantages in renewable energy, energy efficiency and already on the road to transitioning power plants from coal to natural gas seems to have settled on a policy that throws those advantages away," Smith wrote in her environmental law blog.

North Carolina's 36 percent emissions rate cut is in the middle of the range EPA set for the states.

EPA said the projections "show North Carolina and its power plants will need to continue to work to reduce (carbon) emissions and take additional action to reach its goal in 2030."

Critics predict dire consequences from the rule.

"In President Obama's world, the American people are apparently asking for fewer jobs, higher utility bills and even more federal bureaucracy," U.S. Rep. Robert Pittenger, a Charlotte Republican, said in a statement. "Regulation is necessary, but President Obama is swinging the pendulum too far, seeking to please his political supporters at the expense of hardworking American families."

EPA predicts climate and health benefits of the rule of \$34 billion to \$54 billion a year by 2030, compared with \$8.4 billion in annual costs. Electric bills will drop by \$7 a month by 2030 because of increased energy efficiency, it says.

Fossil-fueled power plants release about one-third of the nation's greenhouse gases, which are

linked to climate change. Last year was the warmest on record, EPA says, and 14 of the warmest 15 years came this century.

Utility emissions of carbon dioxide have already dropped 15 percent between 2005 and 2013 as the recession stalled electricity demand and utilities moved to cleaner-burning natural gas fuel.

Duke Energy, the nation's largest electric utility, released 135 million tons of carbon in the U.S. last year despite a 22 percent reduction since 2005.

"This ambitious plan seeks to build on the substantial progress Duke Energy and other utilities have made to reduce our environmental footprint," chief executive Lynn Good said in a statement. "As we continue to move to a lower carbon future, we will also continue to work constructively with states to identify customer solutions that preserve the reliability and affordability that our communities expect."

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE SOUTHEAST

Average annual temperature in the Southeast over the past century included warm conditions during the 1930s and 1940s followed by a cool period in the 1960s and 1970s, says the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

Since 1970, temperatures have risen an average of 2 degrees. An increasing number of days reached 95 degrees or hotter and nights above 75 degrees. The number of extremely cold days dropped.

Temperature increases of 4 degrees to 8 degrees are expected by 2100. Precipitation estimates are harder to measure, with many models showing little overall change.

Parts of the Southeast, including North Carolina's Outer Banks, are vulnerable to sea-level rise.

-

WWAY NewsChannel 3/Associated Press (NC):

<http://www.wwaytv3.com/2015/08/03/epa-smokestacks-rules-unwelcome-unneeded-say-leaders-in-nc/>

EPA smokestacks rules unwelcome, unneeded say leaders in NC

By EMERY P. DALESIO | Associated Press | 8/3/15

RALEIGH, NC (AP) — Stricter carbon dioxide limits on North Carolina power plants are less

demanding than other states, and the state started cutting smokestack pollution more than a decade ago, yet lawmakers are gearing up to fight the Obama administration.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Monday the mandate for North Carolina is moderate compared to other states.

In part that's because the nation's largest electric company was forced to change after a 2002 state law required cleaning coal-burning power plants beyond what federal rules required. Charlotte-based Duke Energy says it's shuttered 40 older coal-burning units in the Carolinas and Midwest since 2011 as cheaper natural gas has become available.

The state Senate plans to vote Tuesday on prohibiting state agencies from implementing the rules until court challenges are resolved.

ALABAMA

Yellowhammer News (AL):

<http://yellowhammernews.com/politics-2/ag-strange-obamas-latest-radical-environmentalist-epa-rule-will-cost-16000-alabama-jobs-opinion/>

AG Strange: Obama's latest radical environmentalist EPA rule will cost 16,000 Alabama jobs (Opinion)

WRITTEN BY LUTHER STRANGE ON AUGUST 4, 2015 AT 9:51 AM CDT

President Obama just announced the latest step in a radical environmentalist agenda that has already given us the Solyndra boondoggle, wasted billions on green energy projects that do not work, and threatened the jobs of everyone who relies on the coal industry. But his Environmental Protection Agency's newest raft of top-down regulations is the worst yet. If allowed to go forward, it will shutter coal-fired power plants, cost consumers hundreds of dollars a year in increased energy bills, and result in thousands of hard-working Americans losing their jobs.

President Obama has a history of disregarding the huge costs of his agency's regulations. In 2012, EPA launched its most recent attack on coal with a major regulation designed to cripple the industry. Under the EPA's own estimates, the cost of that regulation would have outweighed the benefit by a factor of 2 to 1. Astonishingly, the EPA argued that the cost of the regulation was irrelevant. My office disagreed, and we joined with 22 other states to challenge the EPA in court. We won that case, and the United States Supreme Court sent a message to the

administration that it could not issue massive new regulations without any consideration for the cost those actions would impose on the American people. It's a message that apparently fell on deaf ears.

The EPA's newest regulation is far more draconian than its last. Initial estimates indicate that the rule will increase the average annual energy bill of Alabama households by more than \$800 by 2020. It will increase the total annual cost of energy in Alabama by \$5.2 billion. And it will threaten the jobs of the more than 16,000 hard-working men and women in our state who depend on the coal industry.

And for what? The costs of this rule are concrete. We'll see them in our monthly electric bills. We'll see them in our unemployment rate. We'll see them in shuttered coal-fired power plants and in an energy grid that may not have the capacity to meet Alabama's energy needs. But we won't see the benefits. The administration cannot point to one concrete benefit that will accrue to the people of Alabama because of this regulation. This is a giveaway to President Obama's supporters in the green energy industry and the environmental lobby, and nothing more.

In 2008, Barack Obama promised that when he became president, he would bankrupt the coal industry. If unchallenged, the EPA's newest regulation on our nation's energy sector will go far in making that promise a reality. But we aren't going to sit back and allow it to go unchallenged. Instead, we are joining with a coalition of states from across the country to take this latest example of the Obama administration's destructive agenda to court.

Our argument will be a simple one—the EPA cannot ignore the law, and it must consider the cost when it acts.

The people of Alabama deserve nothing less.

WAFF Channel 48 (AL):

<http://www.waff.com/story/29700430/clean-power-plan-could-create-boom-in-tenn-valley-tech-industry>

Clean Power Plan could create boom in Tenn. Valley tech industry

Posted: Aug 03, 2015 9:43 PM EDT | Updated: Aug 03, 2015 | 9:57 PM EDT By Tiani Jones

TENNESSEE VALLEY (WAFF) - In the past several years, utility companies have started to move away from coal, opting for cheaper natural gas.

But this has not come without great expense.

On Monday, President Obama's Clean Power Plan highlighted the government's commitment to renewable energy, and

showed power companies that they will profit from their investments.

"TVA has made more than 30 percent reduction in CO2 admission since 2005 baseline and we're poised to make additional cut over the next 20 years," said Kristine Cooper with the TVA.

Daniel Tate, with the Alabama Center for Sustainable Energy, says there's still a lot of unknowns surrounding President Obama's plan, like, what will this mean for your electric bill?

"Until we really learn about what the state of Alabama will be able to do at the state level we don't necessarily know a whole lot just yet for local consumers or local residents."

However, he sees the plan as an opportunity for growth in the tech industry in the Valley.

"If we're looking at technological development in these industries, it could be a huge boom for our area to really try and take advantage of that," said Tate.

-

Al.com (AL):

http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/08/obama_epa_clean_power_plant_ru.html

Obama unveils clean power rule; Alabama AG vows to fight 'war on affordable energy'

Alex Walsh | awalsh@al.com | Dennis Pillion | dpillion@al.com By Dennis Pillion | dpillion@al.com | on August 03, 2015 at 6:48 PM

President Barack Obama on Monday unveiled the final version of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, the first time the federal government has specifically regulated carbon emissions from the nation's electricity generation sector.

Nationwide, burning fossil fuels to generate electricity is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, which scientists say contribute to climate change, accounting for about 32 percent of total emissions.

At a news conference detailing the plan, Obama said the plan marked an important step in reaching a global accord on climate change.

"No challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than climate change," Obama said. "There is such a thing as being too late."

In a blog post promoting the plan, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said in addition to lessening the impact on climate, it would by 2030 would result in "up to 3,600 fewer premature deaths; 90,000 fewer asthma attacks in children; 1,700 fewer hospital admissions; and avoid 300,000 missed days of school and work."

The CPP seeks a nationwide reduction of carbon emissions from power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. Obama and McCarthy said states would be given individual targets based on their energy mixes and would be able to plot their own paths to meet their emissions reductions.

Many states have already made significant reductions in carbon emissions since 2005 by shuttering older, inefficient coal-fired units and/or switching to natural gas. The domestic shale boom largely powered by hydraulic fracturing has kept gas prices low enough to be competitive with coal, while generating about half the carbon emissions. Natural gas briefly eclipsed coal as the top fuel for electricity generation in the U.S. earlier this year.

According to a White House fact sheet on Alabama, the state has reduced its carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 19 percent already, bringing the state more than halfway to the 2030 target.

Alabama Power spokesman Ike Pigott said that the company would not have any comment on the plan until they had received and reviewed Alabama's state-specific targets.

The final version of the plan varied significantly from the draft released last year, based on the 4.3 million public comments the EPA received on the plan. According to an analysis by John Cushman of InsideClimate News, the final version contains slightly more aggressive targets for states, but gives them more flexible pathways to reach the targets and more time to come up with a plan to do so. Cushman said that by being more flexible, the plan is "better armored" against inevitable legal challenges from the states, the coal industry or utility companies.

Alabama AG vows to fight rule

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange issued a statement Monday afternoon that he intended to continue to fight what he described as the Obama administration's "illegal and arbitrary plans to force power plants to greatly reduce carbon emissions."

Strange, who testified before Congress in opposition to the plan, said the rule would increase Alabamians' electricity bills and "punish" Alabamians whose jobs rely on the coal industry.

"After years of propaganda efforts aimed at convincing Americans that they must sacrifice lower energy bills and jobs in order to meet arbitrary carbon emission goals, the Obama administration has finally unveiled its new energy mandate," Strange said in the news release.

"The Environmental Protection Agency's new Clean Power Plan continues the Obama administration's theme of ignoring the legal limits on its executive authority in order to satisfy a

political agenda that places the lowest priority on the rights of coal industry workers and American consumers."

A White House publication on the Plan addressing common criticisms of the action disputed the notion that energy bills would increase, that service would be unreliable or that the measure exceeded the EPA's legal authority.

Green groups see plan as 'an opportunity'

The Southern Environmental Law Center and GASP, an Alabama air quality advocacy group, were among those to issue statements Monday in support of the Plan.

"The release of the Clean Power Plan today is a milestone event for the country, but for states in the Southeast the real work now begins," said Frank Rambo, senior attorney for SELC and leader of the organization's Clean Energy and Air program. "We need to make smart choices about how we can meet these targets, which will improve public health by reducing pollution while also providing the opportunity for new jobs through clean energy investments.

"The reality is the strategies to meet the Clean Power Plan reflect the energy shift already underway in our states: we're embracing smarter, cleaner, cheaper energy options that would be happening with or without this plan. As a result, our states are well-positioned to meet these reasonable and inevitable pollution reduction targets."

GASP executive director Stacie Propst said the Plan would pay health benefits to Alabama residents and provide an opportunity

"If we embrace this opportunity, Alabama can leapfrog other states for jobs in the clean energy sector," Propst said. "The Clean Power Plan will go a long way toward preventing the diseases and other economic burdens we now experience because of dirty air."

GEORGIA

Peach Pundit (GA):

<http://www.peachpundit.com/2015/08/04/how-the-epa-power-plan-rule-could-affect-georgia/>

How the EPA Power Plan Rule Could Affect Georgia

AUGUST 4, 2015 10:13 AM by JON RICHARDS · 0 COMMENTS

On Monday, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the finalized version of its Clean Power Plan, which some say fulfills a campaign promise by President Obama to make energy prices skyrocket. According to the great Dan Chapman and the stalwart Daniel Malloy of the AJC, for Georgia, it means a 25% reduction in the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere—some 16 million tons.

Environmental officials cite the Peach State's lack of action in battling climate change:

The White House and environmental groups paint a dirty picture of Georgia's carbon-damaged environment. Asthma, for example, harms 8 percent of adult Georgians and 11 percent of its children, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nearly 60 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted into the atmosphere by Georgia power plants in 2013. That's equivalent to the amount of pollution caused annually by 12 million cars.

Georgia politicians have done little to mitigate climate change. Deal, unlike his predecessor, has no energy strategy. A 2006 carbon registry proposal, intended to inventory the state's greenhouse gases, is dead.

Although Georgia is expected to join a lawsuit aimed at halting implementation of the more stringent requirements, Governor Deal has directed the state EPD to figure out how to deal with the new regulations.

In Washington, Georgia Senators Johnny Isakson and David Perdue aren't happy with the Clean Power Plan, saying it has the potential to increase the cost of living for taxpayers.

"The Obama administration continues to pursue policies that will raise the cost of living for hardworking taxpayers, this new rule being the latest example in a long-term trend," said Senator Isakson. "Coal provides more than two-thirds of Georgia's electricity and supports 8,800 jobs in our state. I will fight this energy tax that will destroy jobs and harm our economy. If the president truly wants to help our economy, he should approve the KeystoneXL pipeline, which would create thousands of jobs and help secure our nation's energy future."

"President Obama's constant barrage of overreaching regulatory mandates are crippling our economy's ability to fully recover and stifling our global competitiveness," said Senator Perdue. "The damaging effects of this hostile executive action will drive up energy prices for Georgia families and businesses, while the ripple effect throughout our economy will increase costs of basic necessities for those already struggling to make ends meet. This administration's short-sighted policies continue to hurt the very people they claim to help, which is why I will fight

them with every tool at my disposal.”

The pair are co-sponsoring legislation that would reduce the impact of the rule. Under the Affordable Reliable Electricity Now Act, states could delay implementation of the new measure, and the EPA would be prevented from withholding highway funding to states not in compliance with the mandate. In addition, the mandate is expected to be challenged in federal court because opponents say the benefits to the environment outweigh the costs of compliance.

-

-

The Macon Telegraph (GA):

<http://www.macon.com/2015/08/03/3872321/new-pollution-limits-spur-debate.html>

New pollution limits spur debate in Georgia

BY JEREMY TIMMERMAN August 3, 2015 Updated 17 hours ago

State environmentalists hailed Monday’s new limits on carbon pollution, while a Georgia Power Co. spokesman said that new federal mandates aren’t needed.

Coal and gas power plants will pollute 32 percent less nationwide, and clean energy sources such as solar will meet more of Georgia’s electricity needs, a statement from Environment Georgia said.

“The Clean Power Plan is the single biggest action the U.S. has ever taken on climate and is great news for Georgia,” said Jennette Gayer, Environment Georgia’s director. “Cracking down on coal and gas while ramping up wind, solar, and other clean energy sources will protect our families’ health today and ensure a safer climate for the future.”

In 2012, Georgia’s electric power sector emitted 54.8 million metric tons of carbon, the equivalent of 11.7 million cars, Environment Georgia said. It also cited Plant Scherer in Monroe County as the single largest global warming polluter in the country.

The plan sets state-by-state limits on heat-trapping emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants, the largest single source of such pollution in the country. Under the plan, each state determines how to meet its pollution cap.

Not everyone agrees that the new limits are needed, though.

In an email statement, Georgia Power spokesman Jacob Hawkins said the new rules crossed the line into state responsibilities.

“The implications of the overreaching rules directly impact national energy policy and impede states’ authority to act in the best interests of customers,” he said.

He also pointed out that, since 1990, Georgia Power has invested \$4.3 billion in environmental compliance measures. Last year, the company brought in \$500 million to cover such costs, about 6 percent of the average resident’s monthly bills.

“Without federal mandates, we achieved greenhouse gas emission reductions almost 20 percent below 2005 levels, while providing clean, safe, reliable and affordable power to customers,” Hawkins said.

-

Atlanta Journal Constitution (GA):

[No online link available]

Ga. Needs to Slash emissions by 25%

August 3, 2015

Georgia must cut carbon emissions from its power plants by one-quarter over the next 15 years under new Obama administration rules announced Monday in the president's most forceful push yet to combat a warming Earth.

The regulations were met with immediate criticism, the threat of lawsuits and talk of higher electric rates.

While some states could refuse to implement the rule, Gov. Nathan Deal said he had directed the state Environmental Protection Division "to develop the best approach to this rule for Georgia."

After Georgia officials beseeched the Environmental Protection Agency, the state got more breathing room under the standards that were first proposed more than a year ago. As a result, Georgia Power's massive investment in nuclear energy at Plant Vogtle near Augusta will help the state meet the requirements.

Georgia Public Service Commissioner Chuck Eaton said he "appreciated" the EPA's shifts, but he still thinks the agency is overstepping its bounds and electric rates will go up.

"Some of these folks in Washington are trying to put the word out there that somehow this is going to decrease electric rates, which is really just a bunch of phooey," said Eaton, a Republican.

Jennette Gayer, the director of Environment Georgia, said the plan is feasible and state leaders should embrace it.

"If you look at our wind resources, our solar resources and the potential for energy efficiency, we could knock this thing out of the park," Gayer said.

At the White House, President Barack Obama dismissed "scaremongering" by the fossil fuel industry, business groups and Republicans. He said the plan is the best chance for the U.S. to show leadership, ahead of a possible United Nations climate agreement to be negotiated by mid-December.

He called the Clean Power Plan "the single most important step America has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

Overall, EPA estimates the plan will result in a 32 percent reduction in carbon emissions from 2005 levels. The mandates phase in from 2022 to 2030, and states are to come up with their own strategy for meeting the targets. Georgia's target --- a reduction of 16 million tons of carbon from 2012 levels --- is in the middle range of states, as the state already uses a fairly diverse mix of electricity.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., whose state is almost completely dependent on coal-generated power, has urged states to ignore the rule. Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, said the federal government would impose its own plan on states that fail to produce one, but "we're quite a long time away from that event."

More than a dozen states sued the EPA based on the proposed rule, but Georgia was not among them. Now that the plan is final, Georgia is expected to challenge it in court.

For a president who said during his first campaign that future generations will look back and say "this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal," Obama's climate policy has had its ups and downs.

Congress, even under Democratic control, stymied Obama's first-term plans for a cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions. So Obama has pushed the limits of EPA's powers under the Clean Air Act to regulate power plants and the heat-trapping gases scientists say threaten the planet's future. He has been met with resistance at every turn.

Critics argue that restricting power generation harms the economy, that renewable energy is not reliable enough and that Obama's efforts will have little practical effect on climate change --- particularly with China surpassing the U.S. as the world's top emitter.

The White House and environmental groups paint a dirty picture of Georgia's carbon-damaged environment. Asthma, for example, harms 8 percent of adult Georgians and 11 percent of its children, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nearly 60 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted into the atmosphere by Georgia power plants in 2013. That's equivalent to the amount of pollution caused annually by 12 million cars.

Georgia politicians have done little to mitigate climate change. Deal, unlike his predecessor, has no energy strategy. A 2006 carbon registry proposal, intended to inventory the state's greenhouse gases, is dead.

Atlanta corporate bigwigs Coca-Cola and UPS joined Fortune 500 companies across the country last week in support of Obama's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in clean energy. The dozen or so companies pledged to spend \$140 billion to reduce carbon emissions and create 1.6 gigawatts of new clean energy projects.

But Southern Company, the parent company of Georgia Power, has repeatedly battled with the Obama administration on its power plant regulations.

"The implications of the overreaching rules directly impact national energy policy and impede states' authority to act in the best interests of customers," Georgia Power spokesman Jacob Hawkins said.

Hawkins pointed to moves Georgia Power has taken to reduce emissions.

Coal accounts for 41 percent of Georgia Power's energy portfolio, down from 62 percent in 2011. The state's largest electricity supplier has shuttered coal-burning plants and modernized others to increase efficiency. Natural gas --- plentiful, cheap and cleaner than coal --- is increasingly added to Georgia's energy mix.

And more reductions are on the way. Georgia Power plans to eliminate 15 coal- and oil-fired units and is spending \$6 billion to retrofit coal plants to reduce CO2, sulfur dioxide and mercury.

The environmental construction program comes as the company has also begun increasing, albeit slowly, its renewable energy portfolio, including solar power. The White House credits Georgia with a 55 percent increase in renewable energy since 2008.

Georgia Power's power sources

Coal 41% Oil and gas 35%

Nuclear 22% Hydro 2%

Coming Sunday

Georgia officials acknowledge the reality of climate change yet have done little to combat the threat. Coastal communities, however, are preparing for a future of warmer temperatures, higher

sea levels and the possibility of large-scale damage.

Decline of coal

Alpha Natural Resources Inc., one of the country's biggest coal producers and a major Southeastern U.S. operator, became the latest in a string of coal companies to seek bankruptcy protection amid a shift brought on by cheap natural gas prices and pollution regulations. Full story, A7

Leading generating plants

Generating capacity is expressed in kilowatts.

Bowen 3.16 million Coal

Branch 1.22 million Coal

McDonough 2.52 million Oil, gas

McIntosh 1.32 million Oil gas

Yates 1.25 million Coal

Vogtle 1.10 million Nuclear

Wansley 925,500 Coal

Hatch 900,000 Nuclear

Scherer 751,000 Coal

Bowen, in Cartersville, is the biggest generator in Georgia Power's system and the ninth-largest in the nation. In part because of its size, it's also among the worst carbon polluters in America. Georgia Power's website says Plant Bowen employs 400 people, so closing the plant would have a sizable economic impact on Bartow County.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Myrtle Beach Online (SC):

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/state/article29914576.html>

Nuke plants could help SC meet carbon regulations

8/3/15

BY SAMMY FRETWELL COLUMBIA, SC - Two nuclear plants being built in Fairfield County are expected to help South Carolina comply with new rules that will cut greenhouse gas emissions from the state's remaining coal-fired power plants.

The sweeping federal rules, the nation's first ever regulation of carbon dioxide pollution from power plants, also will force South Carolina to look more carefully at increasing its use of solar, wind and natural gas power, as well as tightening energy efficiency programs.

The rules, which became final Monday, require states to develop plans within the next three years to reduce carbon dioxide pollution below 2005 levels. Those reductions, which amount to a 32 percent cut nationally, must be in place by 2030, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

State plans will likely examine an array of options on how to cut carbon dioxide pollution. A key question is what form of energy the state would rely on to replace some of the energy now produced by coal-fired power plants, which are leading sources of carbon dioxide pollution.

Carbon dioxide is a major reason the climate is changing, with higher temperatures, more weather extremes and rising seas. That's significant in South Carolina, where sea level rise is expected to erode beaches and flood properties along the coast.

SANTEE-COOPER ANNOUNCED PLANS TO CLOSE ITS GRAINGER PLANT IN CONWAY IN 2012 BECAUSE OF THE COST THE COMPANY WOULD FACE TO MAKE IT COMPLIANT WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S MERCURY AND AIR TOXINS STANDARD FOR AIR EMISSIONS.

Like renewable energy, nuclear power plants do not release carbon dioxide when generating electricity. SCE&G and Santee Cooper have partnered to build the \$10 billion nuclear plants northwest of Columbia.

But nuclear power is controversial because atomic energy plants create dangerous waste and the United States does not have a permanent disposal site for the material. The EPA's new rules give credit to South Carolina's construction of the atomic energy plants.

Utilities were reluctant to fully endorse the plan, but officials said Monday they're encouraged. A previous version of the EPA's carbon reduction plan gave less flexibility to using nuclear,

utilities said.

“The final rule appears to address our chief concern, in that it gives South Carolina credit for work by Santee Cooper and SCE&G to reduce (carbon dioxide) emissions through building new nuclear units,” Santee Cooper said in a statement.

The power company said U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., and U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., helped convey that message.

“Today’s final rule makes important improvements over the proposed rule with respect to nuclear power, treating it the same as other clean energy sources like wind and solar,” Clyburn said in a statement. “It is appropriate to treat these energy sources the same because, for purposes of combating climate change, they are the same — all emit zero greenhouse gases.”

Environmental groups are more interested in ramping up the use of solar, wind and other forms of renewable power than nuclear — and they will push for those components in the plan South Carolina submits to the federal government in the next three years.

But they cheered the regulations as an important step in curbing greenhouse gas pollution. South Carolina’s coal-fired power plants released some 29 million metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution in 2013, according to the EPA.

“The release of the (EPA) plan today is a milestone event for the country,” said Frank Rambo, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center, which has offices in South Carolina.

Not everyone is happy with the EPA regulations. U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., blasted the regulations Monday as too expensive and unrealistic for the nation to comply with. He noted that South Carolina is among about 15 states that have challenged the rules in federal court.

“While we all agree our energy policy should embrace sustainable, accessible and affordable sources of energy, the EPA has once again forgotten the affordable piece,” Scott said in a statement after the rules were announced late Monday afternoon. “The EPA should be working to help American families, not finalizing rules that drive up the cost of essential services such as electricity.”

Officials with the EPA said the health benefits outweigh the actual cost by also curbing pollutants that create smog and soon. The tougher rules will help reduce up to 6,600 premature deaths of people who breathe bad air and prevent up to 150,000 asthma attacks in children, according to the EPA.

Overall, the EPA calculates climate and health benefits to be more than \$50 million by the time the rules take effect in 2030.

“We’re proud to finalize our historic clean power plan,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “It will give our kids and grandkids the cleaner, safer future they deserve. The United States is leading by example today, showing the world that climate action is an incredible

economic opportunity to build a stronger foundation for growth.’’

-

The Post and Courier (SC):

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150803/PC16/150809778/1005/obama-aims-for-drastic-carbon-cuts-points-to-charleston-flooding-as-he-calls-for-32-reduction-by-2030>

Cut carbon emissions more, Obama tells power plants

Bo Petersen | Aug 3 2015 6:35 pm Aug 3 8:00 pm

Citing health concerns and climate disasters that are becoming more frequent, expensive and dangerous, President Barack Obama on Monday formally announced an ambitious plan to sharply cut carbon emissions from power plants.

What they said

“Human activities are changing the climate in dangerous ways. Levels of carbon dioxide, which eats up our atmosphere, are higher than they’ve been in 800,000 years.”

President Barack Obama

“The EPA’s final plan is unattainable, unachievable and unrealistic. While we all agree our energy policy should embrace sustainable, accessible and affordable sources of energy, the EPA has once again forgotten the affordable piece... The EPA should be working to help American families, not finalizing rules that drive up the cost of essential services such as electricity.”

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C.

“It’s an issue which should be handled by the people’s elected representatives in Congress, not by unelected bureaucrats at the EPA.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who is running for president.

“The final rule appears to address our chief concern, in that it gives South Carolina credit for work by Santee Cooper and SCE&G to reduce CO2 emissions through building new nuclear units.”

Nicole Aiello, Santee Cooper spokeswoman.

“Today’s rule is the most significant step ever taken by the United States to reduce carbon emissions causing harmful climate change. In the face of overwhelming evidence and extreme weather, we know we must act.”

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C

“Critics of the new rules say that they will increase electricity costs, kill jobs and hurt the economy. However, a study released last week from the Georgia Institute of Technology...concludes that compliance with the EPA rules can be done cost effectively through a combination of renewable energy and energy efficiency policies as well as a modest carbon price.... The result will actually be lower electricity bills for consumers and a growing economy.”

Frank Knapp Jr., South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce president

“With the release of the final carbon regulation, the President once again demonstrated his lack of empathy for hard working Americans across the country who first and foremost wish to secure a robust economic future. Instead of putting their priorities first, the President shamefully put his political legacy first.”

— Mike Duncan, American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity president.

The plan imposes stricter and costlier carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected. Environmentalists quickly championed it as a critical step. Just as quickly, opponents announced plans to sue to stop it.

“Charleston and Miami now flood at high tide,” Obama said, citing a number of specific threats from climate warming. He said power plants are the single biggest source of carbon in the atmosphere and considered a leading driver of it.

Stricter limits have been expected for several years. South Carolina Electric & Gas and Santee Cooper utilities already are taking steps to reduce the percentage of coal used, largely by moving to nuclear power, and rates are rising to pay for the nuclear plant under construction near Winnsboro. There also have been some moves to solar and other fuels.

Coal-fired power plants are considered a leading source of carbon emissions. Six power plants currently use coal in the state, three of them in the Charleston area, according to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. The administration in a news release said 29 million metric tons were released in South Carolina in 2013, an amount equal to the yearly pollution of 6 million cars.

The plan released Monday calls for a 32 percent cut in emissions by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama’s proposed version last year called only for a 30 percent cut. The plan does give states some say-so in how to meet those goals.

Releases announcing the plan said it would save money in health and energy-efficiency ratings, as well as creating jobs in alternative power businesses.

Attorney General Patrick Morrissey of West Virginia, speaking at a summit of Republican state attorney generals, said the coal-producing state would be among a group of states “launching an aggressive legal campaign.”

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson, who was at that summit, is already part of lawsuits opposing the proposed plan last year and a lawsuit to force federal regulators to weigh the costs before further limiting mercury and other pollution emitted by coal-fired power plants.

He called the new plan another example of the EPA exceeding constitutional authority.

“We have concerns that the EPA’s new carbon-emissions rule under the Clean Power Plan could result in an attack on hardworking South Carolina families and businesses. We are closely studying the details of the lengthy EPA rule and continue to work with DHEC and other stakeholders to determine its exact impact on South Carolina,” Wilson said.

The Southern Environmental Law Center, S.C. Coastal Conservation League, Conservation Voters of South Carolina and other conservation groups called on state legislators to adopt what they called a “no regrets” energy policy promoting renewable energy resources that would lower electricity bills and create thousands more jobs.

The recent state passage of a solar energy bill showed “politicians on both sides of the aisle know that clean energy is a nonpartisan winner,” said SELC attorney Blan Holman. “You can be for (the no-regrets plan) even if you are against federal standards, although you’d be foolish not to take those standards into account.”

SCE&G and Santee Cooper officials were still reviewing the 1,500-page plan Monday, but released preliminary statements.

“We have been anticipating more stringent carbon emission standards, which in fact has been a key driver of our new nuclear strategy as we invest in building this source of non-greenhouse emitting base load energy,” said SCE&G spokeswoman Emily Brady.

“We believe the citizens of South Carolina deserve to benefit from adding new, non-carbon emitting generation. We are currently working with state regulators and other stakeholders to develop a common-sense strategy to address carbon emissions that is fair, balanced and will allow SCE&G to continue to deliver reliable and affordable electricity,” she said.

“Santee Cooper has been proactively working to reduce emissions through a number of initiatives, such as these new nuclear units, closing of four coal units, adding renewables and providing customers with rebate-centered energy-efficiency programs,” said Nicole Aiello, public relations director.

“Through these initiatives already underway, Santee Cooper projects we will cut CO2 emissions 44 percent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels,” she said.

The pollution controls form the core of Obama’s ambitious and controversial plan to drastically reduce overall U.S. emissions, as he works to secure a legacy on fighting global warming. Yet it will be up to Obama’s successor to implement his plan, which has attracted strong opposition from the field of Republican presidential candidates.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source.

The Obama administration estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030. The actual price won't be clear until states decide how they'll reach their targets. But energy industry advocates said the revision makes Obama's mandate even more burdensome, costly and difficult to achieve.

Another key change to the initial proposal marks a major shift for Obama on natural gas, which the president has championed as a "bridge fuel" whose growing use can help the U.S. wean itself off dirtier coal power while ramping up renewable energy capacity. The final version aims to keep the share of natural gas in the nation's power mix at current levels.

The Post and Courier (SC):

[No online link]

Obama unveils carbon proposals

Citing health concerns and climate disasters that are becoming more frequent, expensive and dangerous, President Barack Obama on Monday formally announced an ambitious plan to sharply cut carbon emissions from power plants.

The plan imposes stricter and costlier carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected. Environmentalists quickly championed it as a critical step. Just as quickly, opponents announced plans to sue to stop it.

Charleston and Miami now flood at high tide, Obama said, citing a number of specific threats from climate warming. He said power plants are the single biggest source of carbon in the atmosphere and considered a leading driver of it.

Stricter limits have been expected for several years. South Carolina Electric & Gas and Santee Cooper utilities already are taking steps to reduce the percentage of coal used, largely by moving to nuclear power, and rates are rising to pay for the nuclear plant under construction near Winnsboro. There also have been some moves to solar and other fuels.

Coal-fired power plants are considered a leading source of carbon emissions. Six power plants currently use coal in the state, three of them in the Charleston area, according to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. The administration in a news release said 29 million metric tons were released in South Carolina in 2013, an amount equal to the yearly pollution of 6 million cars.

The plan released Monday calls for a 32 percent cut in emissions by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama's proposed version last year called only for a 30 percent cut. The plan does give states some say-so in how to meet those goals.

Releases announcing the plan said it would save money in health and energy-efficiency ratings, as well as creating jobs in alternative power businesses.

Attorney General Patrick Morrissey of West Virginia, speaking at a summit of Republican state attorneys general, said the coal-producing state would be among a group of states launching an aggressive legal campaign.

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson, who was at that summit, is already part of lawsuits opposing the proposed plan last year and a lawsuit to force federal regulators to weigh the costs before further limiting mercury and other pollution emitted by coal-fired power plants.

He called the new plan another example of the EPA exceeding constitutional authority.

We have concerns that the EPA's new carbon-emissions rule under the Clean Power Plan could result in an attack on hardworking South Carolina families and businesses. We are closely studying the details of the lengthy EPA rule and continue to work with DHEC and other stakeholders to determine its exact impact on South Carolina, Wilson said.

The Southern Environmental Law Center, S.C. Coastal Conservation League, Conservation Voters of South Carolina and other conservation groups called on state legislators to adopt what they called a no regrets energy policy promoting renewable energy resources that would lower electricity bills and create thousands more jobs.

The recent state passage of a solar energy bill showed politicians on both sides of the aisle know that clean energy is a nonpartisan winner, said SELC attorney Blain Holman. You can be for (the no-regrets plan) even if you are against federal standards, although you'd be foolish not to take those standards into account.

SCE&G and Santee Cooper officials were still reviewing the 1,500-page plan Monday, but released preliminary statements.

We have been anticipating more stringent carbon emission standards, which in fact has been a key driver of our new nuclear strategy as we invest in building this source of non-greenhouse emitting base load energy, said SCE&G spokeswoman Emily Brady.

We believe the citizens of South Carolina deserve to benefit from adding new, non-carbon emitting generation. We are currently working with state regulators and other stakeholders to develop a common-sense strategy to address carbon emissions that is fair, balanced and will allow SCE&G to continue to deliver reliable and affordable electricity, she said.

Santee Cooper has been proactively working to reduce emissions through a number of initiatives,

such as these new nuclear units, closing of four coal units, adding renewables and providing customers with rebate-centered energy-efficiency programs, said Nicole Aiello, public relations director.

Through these initiatives already underway, Santee Cooper projects we will cut CO2 emissions 44 percent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, she said.

The pollution controls form the core of Obama's ambitious and controversial plan to drastically reduce overall U.S. emissions, as he works to secure a legacy on fighting global warming. Yet it will be up to Obama's successor to implement his plan, which has attracted strong opposition from the field of Republican presidential candidates.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source.

The Obama administration estimated the emissions limits will cost \$8.4 billion annually by 2030. The actual price won't be clear until states decide how they'll reach their targets. But energy industry advocates said the revision makes Obama's mandate even more burdensome, costly and difficult to achieve.

Another key change to the initial proposal marks a major shift for Obama on natural gas, which the president has championed as a bridge fuel whose growing use can help the U.S. wean itself off dirtier coal power while ramping up renewable energy capacity. The final version aims to keep the share of natural gas in the nation's power mix at current levels.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

FLORIDA

Public News Service (FL):

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2015-08-04/climate-change-air-quality/clean-power-plan-likely-to-improve-everglades-air-quality/a47513-1>

Clean Power Plan Likely to Improve Everglades Air Quality

August 4, 2015 | Suzanne Potter, Public News Service - FL

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. – Environmentalists say Florida's national parks will enjoy considerable benefits from President Obama's new Clean Power Plan, which mandates significantly lower

emissions at all coal-fired power plants.

The air quality in Everglades National Park ranked the third worst of any national park, and received a "D" for haziness and an "F" for climate-change impacts in a recent report from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

Phil Compton, senior organizing representative for the Sierra Club Florida, says the low-lying geography of the Everglades makes it especially vulnerable to rising sea levels linked to climate change.

"The Everglades is the most immediately threatened land mass of the United States," he says. "Soon after Miami and Fort Lauderdale are underwater, it's projected the entire Everglades will be underwater."

Compton says one way to combat climate change is to fully fund restoration efforts in the Everglades. Fresh water that flows through the area deposits silt, which raises the level of the land and staves off rising seas.

Ulla Reeves, clean air campaign manager with the NPCA, says the president should go a step further and revamp the Regional Haze Rule of the Clean Air Act to force additional action.

"There are many sources of pollution that are affecting park air quality in a negative way that are not currently being held accountable, specifically under the regional haze rule," says Reeves.

Florida has 11 coal-fired power plants and close to 20 million vehicles that emit greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change.

-

Tampa Bay Times (FL):

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-obama-charts-more-robust-effort-to-fight-climate-change/2239835>

Editorial: Obama charts more robust effort to fight climate change

Monday, August 3, 2015 6:04pm

By imposing this first-ever national standard on emissions from power plants, the nation's single largest source of carbon pollution, the administration is tackling a root cause of global warming head-on and setting a reasonable timetable for action.

The carbon-cutting plan that President Barack Obama announced Monday is good news for consumers, the environment, public health and the economy. The measure gives states and the

energy sector the certainty they need to move toward cleaner energy sources, and it provides a model as world leaders prepare to gather in Paris in December to craft a larger approach to climate change. As a low-lying coastal state, Florida has every reason to work with the Obama administration on adopting a viable plan rather than waging another politically charged legal battle against the president.

The much-anticipated rules on curbing the release of global-warming greenhouse gases are tougher than the draft proposals released last year. Obama's Clean Power Plan calls for the nation's power plants to cut emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, more ambitious than the 30 percent target floated earlier. And it seeks to accelerate a shift in the nation's energy mix by moving states to invest more quickly in renewable energy sources, with the goal of using wind, solar and other like-minded clean energy to generate 28 percent of the nation's demand over the next 15 years.

By imposing this first-ever national standard on emissions from power plants, the nation's single largest source of carbon pollution, the administration is tackling a root cause of global warming head-on and setting a reasonable timetable for action. The rule will assign a target for individual states, and the states can work alone or with others to lower emissions in a variety of ways, from closing old coal-fired plants to investing in clean technology and making buildings more energy-efficient.

In Florida, where power plants released 108 million metric tons of carbon pollution in 2013, the cuts could especially help those suffering from asthma, allergies and other illnesses. With Tampa, Miami and other Florida cities already experiencing a surge in the number of 95-degree days, removing these pollutants will result in cleaner air for people, livestock and crops. Warming also presents a serious threat to coastal flood control, as rises in sea levels endanger roads, public works, the drinking water supply and billions of dollars in private property.

Industry groups, coal states and Republican leaders have already signalled they intend to fight the rules in court, as states have done with other Obama-era environmental measures. That is only moving backward on public health and innovation. As prices for solar and other renewables drop, and as consumers demand more energy-efficient vehicles and homes, the move away from dirty fuel is feeding an entirely new economic sector. The White House estimates that Florida, which has cut its power-sector carbon pollution by 10 percent since 2008, will save energy and money and also generate new jobs in the renewable sector. And the rules give states the flexibility to find local solutions. By putting off the compliance deadline until 2022, two years later than earlier proposed, the administration has demonstrated it wants to work in partnership with the states, rather than to force a cookie-cutter approach nationwide.

The rules put the nation's energy strategy on a sound course, and they give industry the predictability any enterprise needs to make investments and plan for the future. The United States also can rally the world community at the December meeting in Paris to take bold steps in addressing climate change in their home countries. Given how the natural environment shapes livelihoods in Florida, the state should lead the way in reaching these cuts instead of acting like an obstructionist. Presidential candidates, including most of the Republicans who are criticizing the administration's rule, should explain their proposals for dealing with climate change instead

of denying it exists.

-

CALIFORNIA

-

-

LA Times:

<http://www.latimes.com/science/la-me-climate-change-20150804-story.html>

California is ahead of the game as Obama releases Clean Power Plan

By TONY BARBOZA

President Obama's plan to cut carbon pollution from power plants over the next 15 years will force states to address climate change by pushing them to act more like California.

The Clean Power Plan announced Monday poses significant challenges for states that rely on coal-fired power plants for much of their electricity, but complying with the rules will be a breeze for California. That's because the state has practically eliminated coal from its energy portfolio and leads the nation with the toughest regulations to cut the greenhouse gas emissions that are warming the planet.

California officials said Monday that their existing climate change programs put the state on course to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new carbon-dioxide emissions target years ahead of schedule.

Gov. Jerry Brown welcomed the president's "bold and absolutely necessary carbon reduction plan."

If anything, the federal government's measures could accelerate the transition to solar, wind and other renewable energy sources that was spurred on by California's policies, experts said. And green business groups said the EPA's rules are likely to boost the California economy, which is at the forefront of developing technology for renewable energy and efficiency.

"This is going to expand the markets that California policies have worked to establish," said

Mary Solecki, Western states advocate for Environmental Entrepreneurs, a nonprofit advocacy group of business leaders.

Nationwide, the new climate change regulations are expected to cut the electricity sector's greenhouse gas emissions 32% below 2005 levels by 2030, according to EPA estimates. The rules, issued under the federal Clean Air Act, give each state its own pollution reduction goal and allow each to choose the measures it will use to comply.

The new rules won't have much direct effect on California because they are less stringent than the carbon-cutting targets already on the books. State regulators have for years targeted carbon emissions with strict standards on vehicle emissions, energy efficiency, low-carbon fuels and renewable power. Key to California's efforts is the cap-and-trade program to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, factories, transportation fuels and other major sources.

An analysis of the EPA's proposed carbon plan last year by the California Air Resources Board found the state could meet its federal emissions target as much as 10 years early, in 2020, just by fully executing existing climate change programs.

"We're going to be able to comply and even over-comply," said Edie Chang, who oversees the resource board's climate change programs.

California is on track to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 as required under AB 32, its landmark 2006 global warming law. Earlier this year, Brown issued an executive order that would continue that trend, setting a target of reducing emissions by 40% from 1990 levels by 2030.

In 2013, the most recent year available, nearly 19% of California's electricity came from renewable sources, while less than 8% came from coal, according to the California Energy Commission. In January, Brown proposed an ambitious target of 50% renewables by 2030.

Ivanpah: way off the mark? Critics include bird lovers who point to estimates of thousands of avian deaths associated with the plant and fiscal conservatives who complain that despite a \$2.2 billion price tag, which included \$1.6 billion in federal taxpayer dollars in the form of a guaranteed...

Obama's climate plan faces fierce resistance from lawmakers and industry groups in Midwestern and Southern states that rely heavily on coal. They say the regulations will bring job losses and economic harm.

But in California, some of the largest utilities, including the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, applauded the plan.

Solar and wind industry trade groups said Obama's plan could foster more regional cooperation, with potential for some states to develop renewable energy projects to trade the emissions reductions with their neighbors.

"The EPA rules are going to drive a lot of renewable energy investments in the rest of the country, including Western states that border California," said Tom Darin, senior director of Western state policy for the American Wind Energy Assn., an industry trade group.

When President Obama announced the regulations, he noted the success of clean-air policies in California. Obama recalled being a student at Occidental College more than three decades ago, when L.A.'s smog made it hard to breathe when he went out for a run.

"You fast-forward 30, 40 years later, and we solved those problems," he said.

"At the time, the same time, the same characters who are going to be criticizing this plan were saying this is going to kill jobs. Despite those scaremongering tactics," he added, "you can actually run in Los Angeles without choking."

State Sen. Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills), a leading voice on climate change in the California Legislature, said "a national policy would help us defend ourselves against opposition claims that businesses will move out of state for cheaper coal-fired electricity."

Pavley said opponents of California's policy have argued that it is unimportant because the state's emissions are a small percentage of the global total.

"Now, with Obama's announcement, the opposition from the coal companies will be that the United States is just a small part of world greenhouse gas emissions," Pavley said. "Here we go again."

San Diego Union Tribune:

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/aug/03/obama-ignores-californias-green-power-experience/>

Obama ignores California's green power experience

By Dan McSwain

U.S. President Barack Obama said Monday that there is no greater threat to future generations than climate change, which also threatens America's national security, as he presented his plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions at the country's electric power plants. EFE

U.S. President Barack Obama said Monday that there is no greater threat to future generations than climate change, which also threatens America's national security, as he presented his plan to

reduce carbon dioxide emissions at the country's electric power plants. EFE

With his Clean Power Plan, President Barack Obama is repeating California's expensive mistake of ignoring the engineering realities of saving the planet and imposing political quotas requiring solar, wind and other renewable energy sources.

On the bright side, the president gives states flexibility to use auctions to cut carbon dioxide and other climate-changing emissions by 32 percent.

But then he also requires them to get 28 percent of their total power from renewable energy. The latter is a costly distraction from the former.

The big problem is that solar and wind energy are inherently unreliable. Solar power plummets on cloudy days, and falls to zero at sundown. Same goes with wind turbines on a windless evening.

Until somebody invents a cheap battery, powering the modern economy will always depend on standby generators to ramp up whenever green energy falls short — pretty much a daily occurrence.

In California, reliability generally comes from power plants burning natural gas. Thankfully, natural gas is cheap these days, and it emits far less carbon dioxide than coal and other fossil fuels.

But the good news ends there. In 2006, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Legislature required utilities to use renewables for 20 percent of their power, a figure later increased to 33 percent by 2020.

Gov. Jerry Brown has gone further, recently lecturing the pope on the Golden State's virtue and promising to boost renewable power to 50 percent of consumption by 2030.

If these seem like suspiciously round numbers, go the head of the class. No scientist said optimal climate-change strategy requires getting a fifth, one-third, or half our power from renewables. Another clue is that carbon reductions weren't linked directly to the policy.

This omission turns out to be really important. To understand why, consider a local example: Carlsbad's giant Encina power plant is 62 years old. Newer plants in Escondido and Otay Mesa use about 45 percent less fuel to generate the same power.

So if you asked a utility engineer, she'd say: "Let's retire and replace Encina. Bam! Cut carbon more than 40 percent." This, by the way, is much larger than the 16 percent reduction by 2020 from 2013 levels required by California's "cap-and-trade" auction.

Our wise engineer might also buy limited amounts of solar and wind power to handle summer peaks in demand, as well as hedge against higher gas prices in the future. The right mix varies greatly from utility to utility.

However, California's governors didn't ask the engineers. They simply picked easy-to-explain targets. Then they left the actual reductions in carbon emissions to cap and trade, which only launched two years ago.

This delinkage persists. If you ask utility executives — as I have — how much carbon they've cut since 2006, you get a shrug. But they can describe their renewable portfolios to the megawatt.

Caring about carbon is left to the California Air Resources Board, not the Public Utilities Commission. And neither agency is measuring how well the renewable energy push has worked to reduce carbon output, as compared with other strategies.

Here again, I've been asking this question for nearly two years, but I've failed to find a single state official who knows, or even seems to care much.

You'd think that mandating huge purchases of zero-carbon energy would naturally cut emissions by a like amount. But you'd be wrong.

When California imposed its quota, utilities mostly layered green energy on top of the state's ancient gas-fired system. And these old plants don't ramp up and down quickly, so operators run them all night just in case the wind doesn't blow.

The result wasn't just bad for the planet, it's been horribly expensive. Imagine buying a new car for \$30,000, and then leaving your \$15,000 used one in the driveway, just in case, instead of trading it in.

California's grid manager, which requires a 15 percent reserve margin, said in 2013 that it would have 40 percent more generating capacity than needed in 2014.

The agency also warned recently that Brown's move to 50 percent green energy would force managers to pay solar and wind operators not to produce — or face rolling blackouts from voltage volatility.

Meanwhile, high prices compound the cost of overcapacity.

“It requires an investment of approximately \$29 million in utility-scale solar capacity to produce the same output with the same reliability as a \$1 million investment in gas (generators),” while wind is about 10 times the cost, found a 2014 study by the Brookings Institution.

Indeed, California's crash program explains why residential rates have jumped 42 percent for customers of San Diego Gas & Electric.

It's also lucrative for utilities. State and federal law allows them to collect profits for decades on construction of long-distance power lines to reach renewable projects.

For that matter, shutting down the giant, zero-carbon San Onofre nuclear plant gave Southern California Edison a golden opportunity to replace its output at far higher profitability.

To his credit, Obama has given states incentives for nuclear energy.

Just as important, California utilities have cut the amount of carbon in each megawatt by nearly 21 percent from 2006 through 2013. But a big fraction came from, you guessed it, upgrading fossil plants.

Someday, breakthroughs in battery technology may liberate the grid from fossil fuels. But they've been saying that about solar since the 1970s.

Obama has missed an opportunity to learn from California's experience, which suggests that renewable mandates may do less to save planet Earth than to save utilities and green energy developers on Wall Street — at the expense of consumers.

NEW MEXICO

Daily Times (New Mexico):

http://www.daily-times.com/four_corners-news/ci_28580936/official-says-nm-is-ready-new-power-plant

Official says NM is ready for new power plant rules

State environmentalists celebrate new regulations

By James Fenton

UPDATED: 08/03/2015 09:37:59 PM MDT

FARMINGTON — Officials with Gov. Susana Martinez's administration and a local power utility said the state is prepared to meet tighter power plant regulations — announced Monday by the Obama administration — that are intended to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

New Mexico Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn said in a email that the Clean Power Plan amounts to "overreach" by the federal government, but that the elements of the final plan, which has been available in draft form, provided few surprises.

"We've been anticipating this day for over three years," Flynn said. "That being said, as a result of Gov. Martinez's leadership in brokering the San Juan Generating Station agreement in 2012, New Mexico is now in a very strong position ... to create our own plan to meet the new standards and take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gases, all while reducing New Mexico's vulnerability to federal overreach."

Officials with the Public Service Company of New Mexico, which operates the San Juan Generating Station, said the company's proposed plan, which Martinez helped negotiate, takes into account the new emissions standards.

"We remain optimistic that PNM's proposed plan for (the generating station) will put New Mexico in a good position to ultimately comply with EPA's aggressive goals," said Pat Vincent-Collawn, PNM chairman, president and CEO, in a statement.

Vincent-Collawn said the utility's plan — which is currently under consideration by the state Public Regulation Commission — will ensure the power plant continues operations.

"PNM is committed to reducing emissions and increasing the use of cleaner resources in ways that keep electric prices affordable for our customers and ensure the reliability of the electric system," he said. "We still have to review the (Obama administration) plan in detail, but we are encouraged that EPA's emission rate for (New Mexico) is not significantly different from the proposed rule and that EPA has provided additional time for states to submit plans and for utilities to comply."

Arizona Public Service Co. spokesman Steven Gotfried could only say on Monday that the utility, which operates Four Corners Power Plant, is reviewing the plan.

"This is extraordinarily complex rule that has taken the EPA several years to develop and it's going to take some time for APS to fully understand its impact particularly to the Four Corners Power Plant," Gotfried said.

Sanders Moore, director of Environment New Mexico in Albuquerque, said that the required reductions in power plant emissions will lead to greater investment in renewable energy.

"The Clean Power Plan is the single biggest action the U.S. has ever taken on climate and is great news for New Mexico," Moore said. "Cracking down on coal and gas while ramping up wind, solar, and other clean energy sources will protect our families' health today and ensure a

safer climate for the future."

Donald Benn, Navajo Nation EPA executive director, echoed Gotfried's cautious reaction to the new standards.

"It's a 1,600-page document," Benn said. "I can't read that fast. We have people reviewing it right now."

Officials at Navajo Transitional Energy Company — or NTEC, an entity of the Navajo Nation formed in 2012 to purchase Navajo Mine from BHP-Billiton — said that they are reviewing the plan.

NTEC spokesman Erny Zah said a supplemental rule included in the plan is good news for the tribal entity.

"One of the things that is good about the plan is that there is a supplemental that allows Indian Country, which includes the Navajo Nation, to propose their own rules to meet emission standards," Zah said.

Zah said he hopes that the supplemental rule gives tribes greater opportunities to address emissions and the potential for pollution capture technologies in the future.

"It's an opportunity for tribes to examine exactly how they want to tackle this," he said. "We, as NTEC, hope that it will help all tribal partners to engage in a larger dialogue that includes both the usage of coal today and long-term planning that could engage newer technologies."

Newer technologies, he said, include coal gasification and liquefaction, which could lead the way to coal-generated power with reduced emissions, ensuring the Fruitland mine continues operations, he said.

Last fall, NTEC was awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Interior's Energy and Mineral Development program that Zah said will enable the entity to look into the plausibility of those technologies after the mine is paid off in 2017.

"We do look forward to also exploring opportunities with NTEC in renewable and alternative technology development once we realize profits from coal sales," Zah said.

Ten percent of coal profits will go toward renewable and alternative energy projects, which is part of the tribal entity's charter, he said.

Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said in a statement that the plan will provide innovation and jobs in the state.

"Today's proposed clean power rule is designed to help provide what every New Mexican wants for our children — clean air, fresh water and good health," he said. "And it allows each state to shape our own path to lower carbon emissions. I've always said we need a 'do it all, do it right'

strategy to balance traditional energy with new energy sources. Let's seize this opportunity to spur innovation and job creation, strengthen industries New Mexico does well, like solar, wind and biofuels, and build a clean energy future for the generations to come."

Mike Eisenfeld of the Farmington-based San Juan Citizens Alliance said that the plan signals that area power plants and coal mines are aging polluters that will ultimately be replaced by renewable power.

"I think it's an important step forward and an acknowledgment that carbon dioxide is a pollutant that needs to be regulated," Eisenfeld said. "This should stimulate more of a dialogue in a community like ours that has relied on large-scale coal facilities for a long time. ... I offer that none of the arguments (for coal-generated power) hold up."

ARIZONA

Havasunews (Arizona):

http://www.havasunews.com/opinion/other-views-harmful-effects-of-epa-rules-on-arizona-businesses/article_34d3c590-3a3f-11e5-a7fe-276f62b335cc.html

Other Views: Harmful effects of EPA rules on Arizona businesses

Posted: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 12:01 am

By Sen. John McCain

"We'll be put out of business." That's how the Environmental Protection Agency's newest regulation was described by the CEO of Arizona's largest rural electricity providers, the Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives. That sentiment is being expressed by employers all across Arizona every time the EPA issues one of its job-killing mandates. And as Politico recently noted, "scarcely a week goes by without the administration unveiling a new climate change initiative."

This is bad news for agriculture, electricity, homebuilding, and other industry sectors across our

state, which face mounting new costs in order to comply with these burdensome regulations.

Two of EPA's proposed regulations, the Clean Power Plan Rule and the Clean Water Rule, are arguably the greatest threats facing rural Arizona's business community today.

The first rule, which the Obama Administration finalized this week, would shutter one-third of the coal plants in Arizona by classifying carbon dioxide as air pollution under the Clean Air Act. When this rule goes into effect, rural electrical co-ops predict utility bills for about 500,000 rural Arizonans will jump 38-percent.

The second rule would put farmers and ranchers under the thumb of the EPA by allowing the agency to regulate a dry wash or a ditch just it does streams and other "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act. Unless the rule is stopped, many landowners will need EPA's permission just to build on or cultivate their property – or risk having to pay a \$37,000 fine or even jail time.

If you think the EPA won't abuse its power with these rules, think again. Just a few years ago, the agency threatened to freeze billions of dollars in federal transportation funding from coming to our state until the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality could prove that haboobs were not the fault of farmland or dirt from roads.

Every Arizonan knows that dust storms occur naturally in the Sonoran Desert, but in EPA's eyes, the jury is still out on that question.

So what can be done about EPA's overreach? Senator Flake and I have sponsored legislation that would do away with the proposed Clean Water Rule, and we are building a case against the Clean Power Plan Rule following a recent Supreme Court ruling that said EPA can't implement a regulation if it hasn't fully analyzed its impact on the economy. In Arizona, agriculture, water, and power are our economy.

Ultimately, the American people need to join Congress in calling out the EPA and President Obama and stopping this regulatory abuse. These regulations aren't a good-faith effort to protect public health or the environment.

Rather, they are an extension of the President's executive action strategy to use his "pen and phone" to unconstitutionally forge a legacy—a legacy that will have a chilling impact on Arizona's economy right when it's starting to recover.

Cronkite News (Arizona):

<http://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2015/08/03/arizona-environmentalists-cheer-epa-clean-power-plan-utilities-wary/>

Arizona environmentalists cheer EPA Clean Power Plan, utilities wary

By Nihal Krishan | Cronkite News | POSTED: Aug 3, 2015

WASHINGTON – Arizona environmental groups cheered the final version of the Clean Power Plan unveiled Monday by the Environmental Protection Agency, a first-ever national standard that aims to cut power plant carbon emissions by a third by 2030.

“Today marks the end of an era for dirty power plants that have spewed dangerous pollution into our air without limits for too long,” Sandy Bahr, director of the Grand Canyon chapter of the Sierra Club, said in a prepared statement.

But Arizona utility companies and state environmental officials both were more cautious Monday, saying they need time to study the plan that has been more than a year in the making.

“We really need some more time to study the rule and then we’ll have more opportunity to see how this will impact us in Arizona,” said Patrick Ledger, CEO of Arizona Electric Power Cooperative.

The plan was officially announced Monday by President Barack Obama, who said action needs to be taken now to protect future generations from climate change caused by greenhouse gases.

Under the plan, each state will have a target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from their power plants by 2030. States’ final emission goals will range from 771 pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt-hour generated to 1,305 pounds per megawatt-hour.

“We’re setting fair, consistent standards across the country. And we’re giving states and utilities the time and the flexibility they need to adopt strategies that work for them,” EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said in a conference call discussing the plan.

McCarthy stressed the flexibility the plan offered states to achieve their carbon reductions as they see fit, customizing the plan to their own needs and requirements.

“States and utilities told us they needed more time than the proposal gave them, and we listened,” McCarthy said. “That’s why in the final rule ... the required pollution reductions don’t kick in until 2022. That’s a two-year extension (from the original plan).”

Earlier versions of the plan would have required that Arizona achieve some of the steepest carbon-emission reductions in the nation.

Under the final version, Arizona’s 2030 goal is 1,031 pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt-

hour, down from 1,552 pounds per megawatt-hour in the benchmark year of 2012. That puts Arizona about in the middle of the range for states in the final Clean Power Plan.

If implemented, the plan would cut carbon emissions from the power sector by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

“It seems like the new plan has become a little more lenient but nothing has been confirmed yet and I know the other utilities are in the same boat as us right now,” Ledger said. “It’s all up in the air.”

But others said Arizona has an opportunity to lead the nation by developing alternative energy sources to meet the plan.

“With the Clean Power Plan now final, the question is not whether to reduce carbon emissions from the electric power sector in Arizona but how,” said Amanda Ormond, Arizona representative for Interwest and Advanced Energy Economy, in a statement from the clean-energy trade association.

Renewable energies like solar, wind and geothermal will be at the heart of Arizona’s attempts to reduce its carbon footprint and comply with the new national strategy, advocates said.

“Arizona is in a great position to meet these final federal targets with solar energy projects already being planned,” John Shepard, senior director of programs at the Sonoran Institute, said in a prepared statement. “Accelerating solar and other renewable energy ultimately will give consumers more stable rates, contribute to a healthier environment and strengthen Arizona’s economy.”

In addition to the climate benefits, supporters pointed to the health benefits of cleaner air.

“The Clean Power Plan isn’t just a program to help stabilize the climate and modernize our energy sources, it is also a valuable investment in Americans’ health and well-being.” Barbara H. Warren, director of the Arizona chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said in a prepared statement.

She said air pollution can lead to asthma attacks, heart attack and premature death. The White House claims that the plan will prevent an estimated 90,000 asthma attacks in children and head off 3,600 premature deaths.

While officials wanted time to study the plan, advocates said now is the time to act.

“Our public officials should stand with countless Arizonans throughout our state by siding with more clean-energy jobs and cleaner air and water by supporting the Clean Power Plan,” Bahr said.

NEVADA

Las Vegas Sun:

<http://lasvegassun.com/news/2015/aug/04/clean-energy-advocates-nevada-welcome-new-epa-rule/>

Clean energy advocates in Nevada welcome EPA rule limiting power plant emissions

By Daniel Rothberg

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015 | 2 a.m.

President Barack Obama sought to mark his legacy on Monday with an ambitious rule that would roll back greenhouse-gas emissions with regulations that curb emissions from power plants, the largest source of carbon pollution.

And while the rule is expected to face considerable opposition, with attorneys general preparing legal challenges and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sending preemptive letters urging all 50 governors to not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's plan, many elected officials and environmental advocates cheered the news.

Standing in front of the solar arrays that line Las Vegas City Hall, city officials and leaders in clean energy held a rally in support of the rule. Las Vegas City Councilman Steve Ross called it "a great day."

"I support the state in its creation of a robust, smart, clean power plan to both reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants and allow Nevada to increase its reliance on homegrown clean energy," Ross said, who also urged individuals to cut personal carbon use.

With the most possibilities for solar generation of any state and the third-most potential for geothermal generation, a greater push toward renewables across the nation could expand an export market for renewables, a likely stimulus for the state's economy.

“Because of our boundless solar and geothermal, it puts Nevada in a great position to be an exporter of energy to our neighboring states as part of the definition of the regional energy market,” Jennifer Taylor, executive director of the Clean Energy Project, said.

Not everyone cheered the announcement. Nevada Rep. Joe Heck released a statement saying that although he sees potential for renewable growth in the state, he believes that fossil fuels remain an important industry for energy and jobs. “To maintain our economic and national security, we must maximize all of our nation’s energy resources, including renewable sources, alternative fuels, and fossil fuels, all in a way that balances economic development and protecting our environment,” he said. “This plan is not the all-of-the-above energy strategy needed to boost job creation and reduce energy prices for families.”

Under the final Environmental Protection Agency rule, which administration officials say incorporated 4 million public comments and hundreds of meetings, each state is required to develop a plan for reducing power-plant emissions and received individualized goals from the EPA. Nevada’s goal is to reduce its power plant emissions rate from a historical 2012 baseline rate of 1,102 pounds of carbon dioxide per net megawatt hour to 855 by 2030.

The state will be asked to cut its emission less than it otherwise would have been after the EPA changed its methodology in the final rule. Paul Thomsen, director of the Nevada Office of Energy, said that although the rate is less stringent than the one that the EPA issued in its draft proposal, his office in collaboration with other state agencies will need to review the changes before developing a plan. “We really need to dig into the detail of the final rule to understand where those changes came from,” he said.

Compared to other states, the EPA considers the Nevada reductions to be more stringent. However, a spokesperson for NV Energy said that it expects to be able to comply with the regulations without an increase in customer rates.

At the press conference, supporters of the rule said the state is well on track to implement the EPA regulations, having shifted away from coal-fired plants in a 2013 bipartisan legislative effort. Last year, NV Energy, the state’s regulated utility, closed three of its four coal-generated units at Reid Gardner Power Plant near Moapa and plans to close the fourth unit in 2017. And with tax breaks to renewable energy projects, the state has seen more than \$5.5 billion in private development of renewables and leads in per capita solar jobs.

A statement from the White House Monday applauded Nevada for already taking steps to reduce its power-sector carbon footprint by 14 percent since 2008 and a commitment to produce 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, the Democratic minority leader, echoed this sentiment Monday. “Nevada is well-positioned to continue building its clean energy economy under the Clean Power Plan,” Reid said in a press release. “States like Nevada will have the flexibility to tailor our own programs for reducing carbon emissions, while protecting public health, and keeping electricity affordable and reliable.”

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of April 2015, about 72 percent of Nevada's electricity generation came from natural gas, which produces about half as much carbon as coal. Renewables accounted for about 15 percent of electricity generation, hydroelectric for about 8 percent and coal for about 3 percent.

Obama is scheduled to deliver the keynote address for the National Clean Energy Summit Aug. 24 at Mandalay Bay.

West Virginia's attorney general has already vowed to challenge the new rule and the New York Times reported over the weekend that several states are expected to join the lawsuit. It's unclear whether Nevada would join. A spokesperson for Attorney General Adam Laxalt said his office will be reviewing the rule, but would not comment on future litigation plans, if any.

The governor, who is traveling in Europe, could not be reached for comment.

UTAH

Salt Lake Tribune:

<http://www.sltrib.com/home/2799615-155/utahns-react-to-obamas-clean-power>

Utahns react to Obama's Clean Power Plan

By BRIAN MAFFLY

First Published 1 hour ago - Updated 1 hour ago

Environmentalists praise the president, who calls his plan a moral obligation, but critics say stricter carbon dioxide limits would badly damage state's economy.

Utah's political leadership wasted little time in denouncing President Barack Obama's plan to cut

carbon emissions from the nation's power plants.

The "Clean Power Plan," released Monday, is expected to accelerate the nation's move away from coal in favor of renewable energy sources and possibly nuclear power.

But it is "unjustified and potentially devastating for Utah and the nation," according to Sen. Orrin Hatch, who vowed to do "everything in my power" to thwart the new regulation.

"This rule could destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs and impose significantly higher utility bills on families and businesses while producing no meaningful climate benefits according to the EPA's own model," Hatch said. "Over the last 30 years, technological advances driven by the free market have led to significant improvements in air quality. We will continue to see further improvements without the unnecessary burden these new regulations place on hardworking Americans."

The president calls his plan a moral obligation, however, warning anew that climate change will threaten future generations if left unchecked.

Touting the plan at a White House event, Obama said the unprecedented carbon dioxide limits are "the single most important step" America has ever taken to fight climate change. He warned that because the problem is so large, if the world doesn't get it right quickly, it may become impossible to reverse, leaving populations unable to adapt.

"There is such a thing as being too late when it comes to climate change," Obama said.

Utah leaders' biggest concern is associated with the rule's goal of reducing demand for coal, which releases more carbon dioxide than any other fuel source. Coal mining is a crucial industry for Utah's rural heartland.

Power plants account for roughly one-third of all U.S. emissions of the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming, making them the largest single source. Already, Obama has curbed greenhouse gas emissions from other major sources, including cars and trucks.

The final version of the president's plan imposes stricter carbon dioxide limits on states than was previously expected: a 32 percent cut by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, the White House said. Obama's proposed version last year called only for a 30-percent cut.

It also gives states an additional two years — until 2022 — to comply, yielding to complaints that the original deadline was too soon. States also will have an additional year to submit their implementation plans to Washington.

But Utah could bear a heavier burden for meeting the goals because it exports much of the power produced within its borders and relies far more on coal for its own electricity. About 80 percent of the power produced in Utah comes from the black rock versus less than 40 percent for the nation as a whole.

A key question remains as to whether Utah would get credit for the wind, solar and geothermal power it produces but sells to out-of-state utilities, observers say.

Meanwhile, environmentalists hailed the rule as a long-overdue step that affirms the nation's trend away from coal. It carries collateral benefits that come with not burning coal, they say.

"The Clean Power Plan is a chance for Utah to move towards cleaner sources of energy," said Lindsay Beebe, Sierra Club's Utah representative. "Utah's coal-fired power plants emit pollution that contributes to smog, bad air days, and haze at our national parks, hurting our health and negatively impacting our quality of life."

Beebe noted that two of Rocky Mountain Power's plants — Hunter and Huntington outside of Price — cause 40 percent of Utah's haze pollution from the electric sector.

"We can reduce our use of coal to help make our state cleaner and healthier," she said.

HEAL Utah and others say clean power alternatives will offset any job losses stemming from reduction in coal.

COLORADO

Denver Business Journal:

http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/blog/earth_to_power/2015/08/colorado-must-cut-co2-by-40-percent-under-clean.html

Colorado must cut carbon emissions by 40% under Obama's Clean Power Plan

Cathy Proctor, August 3rd, 8:07pm

You can read reaction from across the state here.

The EPA's Colorado-specific fact sheet sets out three target goals for Colorado — each representing a different way to figure carbon dioxide emissions. State officials say it's too early to know which set of calculations will guide Colorado's compliance plan.

Based on the basis of the pounds of CO₂ produced per megawatt hour of power generated, Colorado needs to cut its CO₂ emissions by 40 percent by 2030.

But if figured on the basis of the state's overall CO₂ emissions from all sources, Colorado's target is smaller — a 28 percent cut by 2030 to get from 41.7 million short tons of CO₂ emitted in 2012 down to 29.9 million short tons of carbon emissions in 2030.

The fact sheet also indicates there may be wiggle room to account for “new sources” of CO₂. And if those new sources are factored in, Colorado has to cut emissions by about 22 percent, from 41.7 million short tons in 2012 to 32.5 million short tons by 2030.

The main sources of human-caused CO₂ stem from burning fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas in power plants, and also from burning fossil fuels such as gasoline and diesel for transportation. The third major source is industrial processes, such as the production of iron, cement or chemicals, according to the EPA.

Whichever way Colorado's carbon emissions are counted, Wolk said he thinks the EPA's goals for Colorado will “require some work by 2030 to get there ... but we've been given quite a bit of flexibility and a better timeline for achieving that goal” compared to the EPA's original proposal in June 2014.

As for Colorado's coal plants, Wolk said he's not sure — on a quick read of the plan — that plants will have to be shut down.

It's more likely, Wolk said, that Colorado will need to continue along the path outlined by the state's “Clean Air-Clean Jobs Act of 2010,” which required adding pollution control equipment to some existing coal-fired power plants, shutting down others and switching to natural gas in some cases.

“Overall, it's pretty good,” Wolk concluded of the EPA's final “Clean Power Plan.”

“It's the right thing to do, because this is something that does have an impact and will improve public health,” he said.

The EPA also is offering incentives, or extra credit, along the way — such as for filing the state's plan for meeting the goal ahead of the 2018 deadline.

Colorado also could get extra credit if the plan details how improvements will be made in poor communities, according to Wolk.

The EPA also said it wants to hear from states about how economically disadvantaged communities could be helped by the CO₂ reduction plan — meaning Colorado can help shape

that area, Wolk said.

Colorado did get some credit for adding solar and wind power to the state's electricity grid years ago — but not as much as the state would have liked, Wolk said.

The interim goals, which start in 2022, also are softer compared to the original plan rolled out in June 2014, he said.

The final plan approved Monday also has flexibility in how the state complies with the goals — such as allowing state to trade “credits” with other states, Wolk said.

Ultimately, now that EPA's final plan is known, state officials can move ahead with crafting a plan, he said.

“Now we know what we have to work with, and now's the time to pull together all the stakeholders,” Wolk said.

“We'll want to hear from the utilities themselves and stakeholders who are involved with energy and utilities around the state to see what kind of ideas and innovation and change they can collectively propose,” he said.

Denver Post:

http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_28578987/clean-power-plan-wants-colorado-cut-co2-emissions?source=skipframe-ht.ly

Clean Power Plan wants Colorado to cut CO2 emissions by 28 percent

Colorado conservationists say state is in good shape to meet 2030 goal, but coal-dependent communities worry about impacts

By Alicia Wallace

POSTED: 08/03/2015 02:46:08 PM | UPDATED: ABOUT 2 HOURS AGO

President Barack Obama on Monday unveiled the final version of his Clean Power Plan, a sweeping yet contentious collection of regulations aimed at slashing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants across the country.

Nationwide, the plan seeks a 32 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 based on

a benchmark set in 2005. Each state has its own emissions-reduction goal, and each will have flexibility in how the targets are reached.

The final rule is tougher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's initial proposal, which sought to cut emissions nationwide by 30 percent.

"We only get one home; we only get one planet," Obama said Monday at a White House event where the final Clean Power Plan was released. "There's no plan B."

Colorado's 2030 goal of a 28 percent reduction in overall carbon dioxide emissions — or a 40 percent reduction in the pounds of CO2 emitted per megawatt hour of electricity generated — was set using a 2012 benchmark.

"Having them stick to that baseline year of 2012, we don't necessarily get credit for being early thinkers and early movers," said Dr. Larry Wolk, executive director and chief medical officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Colorado in 2010 set a goal for investor-owned utilities to generate 30 percent of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2020. Since 2005, Xcel Energy has reduced CO2 emissions by 26 percent. The state's largest utility is on track to reduce its carbon emissions by 35 percent by 2020.

Just how state regulators will spur compliance with ambitious new Clean Power Plan goals will be determined in the coming year. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is required to submit a final plan — or an initial plan with an extension request — by Sept. 6, 2016.

Monday evening, government and industry continued to pore over the hefty, 1,560-page document. Based on initial gleanings, Wolk said some favorable elements include the flexibility granted to the states to achieve the emissions targets, the ability for interstate and intrastate trading of energy credits, and an incentive for renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts that benefit economically disadvantaged communities.

Proponents said Colorado is in a good position to meet the standards.

"The goals are very achievable, given the path that we're on in Colorado in reducing (carbon dioxide) generation from coal-powered plants and in expanding energy-efficiency measures," said Howard Geller, executive director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

But there was plenty of push-back against the rules Monday.

Several states sued to stop the plan as it was proposed last year. Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman, citing concerns about potential job losses and an unrealistic set of goals and timelines, on Monday said she may join them.

Calling the new plan a "war on coal," Moffat County Commissioner John Kinkaid said he is

worried about the rule's effect on the 2,000 coal-mine and power-plant workers in his county.

"We've never recovered from the Great Recession. We already have an excess of homes for sale," he said, noting retailers such as Safeway and Family Dollar have shuttered. "We can't afford any further contraction to our economy. We're already hurting."

Kinkaid said he's optimistic that officials at the state Department of Public Health and Environment will be flexible in how the state meets the goal.

The EPA projects the emissions reductions would result in "net climate and health benefits" of \$25 billion to \$45 billion. Coal and natural gas would remain the two leading sources of electricity generation, EPA officials wrote in the rule.

Coal is used to generate about 60 percent of Colorado's electricity, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration data. But some of the state's largest coal burners increasingly have been adding renewable energy sources to meet growing demand.

This year, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association announced the addition of a 150-megawatt wind farm in Kit Carson County. The Fort Collins-based Platte River Power Authority said it would add a 22-megawatt solar array near Wellington.

Renewable-energy projects are becoming more financially palatable. However, the transmission lines to link resources are costly, utilities officials have said. A 72-mile line between Wray and the wind farm near Burlington is projected to cost Tri-State \$40 million, company spokesman Lee Boughey said in April.

Others noted the plan could be a boon to the state's economy.

The American Wind Energy Association projected that employment in the industry could more than quintuple in the next 15 years to 380,000 jobs from 73,000 today.

Colorado, which has about 6,000 to 7,000 workers in the wind industry, led the nation in wind-energy manufacturing jobs in 2014 as industry giants such as Vestas ramped up at plants in Brighton, Pueblo and Windsor.

"Colorado is very well-positioned to economically benefit," said Michael Goggin, senior director of research at the American Wind Energy Association.

Weighing in

The CDPHE will involve the public as it develops plans for meeting federal clean-air goals. To get involved, sign up at colorado.gov/cdphe/cleanpowerplan.

-

OKLAHOMA

-

-

The Oklahoman:

<http://newsok.com/article/5437896>

Oklahoma officials voice sharp criticism for Obama's emissions rules

Minutes after the president had laid out the plan's goals, Oklahoma's governor and attorney general issued statements objecting to the plan.

by Adam Wilmoth Modified: August 3, 2015 at 9:17 pm • Published: August 3, 2015

Oklahoma political and business leaders on Monday challenged President Barack Obama's plan to reduce carbon emissions from the country's power plants, criticizing the formal rules as expensive and overreaching.

Gov. Mary Fallin called the plan "one of the most expansive and expensive regulatory burdens ever imposed on U.S. families and business leaders."

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, who already twice has sued the federal government over the proposed rules, pledged to continue challenging the plan.

The president on Monday called his Clean Power Plan the "single most important step American has ever taken in the fight against global climate change."

The new EPA rules promise to cut carbon dioxide emissions 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, but interim goals must be met by 2020. Pruitt has said EPA's proposed interim goal for Oklahoma would mean a 33 percent reduction for carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 and an almost 36 percent decrease by 2030.

During a speech from the White House on Monday afternoon, Obama said power plants generate about one-third of the country's carbon emissions, representing more emissions than cars, airplanes and homes combined. The plan allows states to develop their own plans for how to reduce the carbon emissions.

"This plan reflects the fact that not everybody is starting in the same place," Obama said. "We're

giving states the time and flexibility they need to cut pollution in a way that works for them.”

Fallin, however, said the plan will cause more harm than good.

“The EPA’s new rules will have minimal environmental benefits; they will, however, threaten our fuel diversity and lead to significant increases in utility costs across the country,” Fallin said in a statement Monday.

Fallin in April issued an executive order stopping state agencies from planning for the Clean Power Plan. Fallin spokesman Alex Weintz said Monday that the order remains in place and that the governor’s office continues to support the attorney general’s efforts to fight the Clean Power Plan in court.

Pruitt has said the new EPA rules are unconstitutional.

“The president could announce the most ‘state friendly’ plan possible, but it would not change the fact that the administration doesn’t have the legal authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon emissions from these sources because these sources are already being regulated and the Act prohibits this sort of double regulation,” Pruitt said in a statement Monday.

The rules also threaten the reliability and affordability of electricity in Oklahoma and throughout the country, he said.

“Oklahoma is suing the EPA over the Clean Power Plan because we are asking the federal government to comply with the Clean Air Act, not because we need more time and flexibility to implement this unlawful plan,” Pruitt said. “My office will continue to challenge the EPA as long as the administration continues to pursue this unlawful rule.”

Other reaction

The Oklahoma Sierra Club praised the Clean Power Plan, and spokeswoman Whitney Pearson called on state leaders to develop a strong plan for compliance.

“The Clean Power Plan is a huge opportunity for Oklahoma,” said Pearson, organizing representative for the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign.

“Oklahoma is already a leader in renewable energy development, and the state should adopt a plan that supports growing wind and solar industries. But right now politicians in Oklahoma are standing in the way of our state’s ability to write a plan to reach the commonsense goals in the Clean Power Plan.”

The state’s U.S. senators, however, expressed opposition to the rules and pledged to continue to fight against them. Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Tulsa, criticized the plan as too expensive and unrealistic. “The Obama administration has no concerns for costs, no concept of reality and no respect for the rule of law,” said Inhofe, chairman of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

“EPA’s final rule will force Americans to replace dependable, affordable energy with high-cost, unreliable alternatives, and generations of energy consumers will be left footing the bill.”

Sen. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma City, said the rules will have few environmental benefits.

“This regulation appears to be more messaging than solution, but the pain to the American consumer will be profound,” Lankford said. “The rule will slow ingenuity and Americans will notice the significant effect every month when they pay their utility bill. I will continue to work against this apparent overreach from the EPA.”

LOUISIANA

The Advocate (Louisiana):

<http://theadvocate.com/news/13083021-123/story.html>

Louisiana officials express opposition for President Obama's Clean Power Plan, fear job loss in state

AMY WOLD

Louisiana officials have gone on record objecting President Barack Obama’s Clean Power Plan.

Although what the impact of the new plan, released Monday by the White House, will be on Louisiana is still unclear, one thing isn’t: State officials know they don’t like it.

The Clean Power Plan’s goal is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 at the country’s power plants, but leaves the exact details of how that will be done up to the states.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality said its staff needs time to review the rule, but objections to the plan remain.

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch sent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a letter last year outlining the department's opposition: namely that the plan reaches beyond EPA's current authority.

EPA and DEQ are authorized to limit pollution from industrial sources, but this rule expands that to home efficiency and to increasing renewable power supplies beyond what the Clean Air Act authorizes, she wrote.

Opposition also has been voiced by the state Public Service Commission and the Louisiana's attorney general as well as the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said the plan would threaten good-paying energy and manufacturing jobs in Louisiana.

"The loss of these jobs will worsen their health and diminish their futures. The Obama administration's refusal to recognize this, all for the sake of possibly improving CO2 emissions by at most a fraction of a percent, is shortsighted and unfair to workers," he wrote.